JUMUIYA YA AFRIKA MASHARIKI

THE COMMUNITY

ONE PEOPLE, ONE DESTINY

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The Rise of the East African Community

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EAC Set for Major Student Exchange Initiative


EAC Secretary General, Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko

The East African Community (EAC) and the Federal Republic of Germany on 9th April, 2018 signed a financing agreement of €5 million for the EAC Scholarship Programme.

The scholarship programme will be implemented in cooperation with the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) and KfW, the German Development Bank. The programme is yet another gesture of Germany's strong support for the integration process in East Africa.

The goal of the programme is to promote the integration agenda in East Africa by supporting higher education students. Scholarship beneficiaries will undoubtedly foster awareness about the integration, and spur social change and economic growth.

The programme is designed to support EAC students with academic talent and leadership qualities. In addition to the provision of scholarships, the EAC scholars will be actively facilitated through programme activities such as regional leadership seminars and mentoring schemes.

It is further anticipated that the beneficiaries of the scholarship programme will become highly skilled 'change agents' for their home communities as qualified professionals with a strong understanding of regional challenges, approaches and expertise in their subject fields.

East Africa has a long history of cooperation in education particularly between Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The EAC is cognizant of the fact that most of its aspirations can only be achieved through high quality and relevant education and training.

Under Article 103(a) of the EAC Treaty, Partner States undertake to promote cooperation in the development of science and technology, which are viewed as the prime movers of regional integration and development. The Community's objective then is to develop a completely harmonized East African education system for the enhancement of a productive human resource base.

Inherent in a harmonized education system are: the establishment of a common reference to facilitate comparability, compatibility, equation and mutual recognition of education/training systems and qualifications among Partner States. There is also the shared view among Partner States on quality, criteria, standards and learning outcomes; promoting mobility of students and labour to foster integration, and; promotion of the region as a Common Higher Education Area.

The harmonization of education systems and curricula dates way back to the first Community. The EAC had a single examination system and same curricula. The University of East Africa (UEA) had its main campus in Makerere, Kampala, Uganda with affiliate colleges in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. In the early 1970s, UEA split into three independent universities: the University of Dar es Salaam, Makerere University, and the University of Nairobi.

The EAC acknowledges that youth traditionally bring energy, drive and passion to any activity they embark on, and the integration process in East Africa is no exception. Added to this is the Community's view that the youth will be the major beneficiaries of an integrated East Africa which is expected to bring with it various benefits which include, among other things, harmonized fees in institutions of higher learning, increased employment opportunities, better infrastructure, increased trade and investment, and socio-cultural integration. Some of the youth are already reaping these benefits of the integration.

The EA Scholarship Programme borrows heavily from the Erasmus Programme (***EUR**opean Community **A**ction **S**cheme for the **M**obility of **U**niversity **S**tudents)* –an EU student exchange programme that was established in 1987.

Erasmus scholars study at least three months or undertake an internship of at least two months to an academic year in another European country. The programme has an in-built guarantee credit transfer scheme as long as the scholars abide by the terms previously set. A key component of the programme is that students do not pay extra tuition fees to the university that they visit. Scholars are also eligible to apply for an Erasmus grant to cover additional expenses occasioned by studying abroad.

For many EU students, Erasmus is their first time to live and study abroad. Erasmus has become a cultural phenomenon and is highly popular among many students in Europe. The programme fosters learning and understanding of the host country.

The EAC on its part is convinced that the scholarship programme will help nurture a pan-East African identity among the youth. A year abroad will enable students to visit EAC Partner States other than the ones in which they were born and demystify any suspicions and mistrusts that could be inherent among citizens of one country vis-à-vis other countries. It will be a perfect opportunity for exposure of our youth to various peoples and cultures in the region.

Going forward, the Community's dream is that support for the scholarship programme will expand to include funding from philanthropists, Partner States' governments, corporates and charitable foundations.

Amb Liberat Mfumukeko
Secretary General
East African Community

73 Firms Join Plan for Fast EAC Trade

By Eunice Murathe

Some 73 companies are on track for expedited payment of refunds and reduced customs security checks after they enrolled in an East African Community (EAC) programme to promote regulatory compliance, enhance trade and improve border security.

The firms will reap other benefits of the programme, named Authorised Economic Operators (AEO), including automatic passing of their declarations and will undergo no physical examination of goods except where risks are high, among others. The incentives apply to multinationals as well as small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that have joined the programme.

Seventy three companies have so far been enrolled in the programme since it was introduced over three years ago. The EAC targets to enrol over 500 companies in the next five years.

Under the scheme, firms involved in international trade are scrutinised and certified as AEO. The programme is open to all players including clearing agents, revenue authorities and standards bodies.

The programme is expected to reduce the cost of doing business in EAC region, improve border security, promote regulatory compliance and hasten clearance.

The EAC secretariat, the World Customs Organisation and the German government through GIZ commenced implementation of AEO. It will harmonise regional customs standards and also simplify regional customs procedures. The concept is one of the trade facilitation and supply chain standards in the World Customs Organisation Council Framework.

Eunice is a Journalists based in Kenya.

EAC Trailing in Exportation of Bananas

By Zephania Ubwani

Tanzania and Uganda consume 50% of bananas grown in Africa, but realise only 9% of the potential yield due to poor productivity due to pests and diseases.

The two countries do not feature among the leading exporters of the food crop because of little efforts to boost production, quality and secure foreign markets.

"Cote d'Ivoire and Cameroon are the two leading banana exporters in Africa. What is wrong with us in East Africa?" asked Dr Cyprian Ebong, the acting Executive Secretary of the Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa (Asareca).

He was speaking at the launch of a US$ 13.8 million Breeding Better Bananas (BBB) project, a banana improvement project targeting Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda and Ethiopia. The three and a half-year project aims at improving productivity of the crop and make it a traded commodity through marker assisted hybrid selection.

Dr Ebong said although banana is both a food and cash crop, the region has failed to exploit the potential due to poor production technologies coupled with disease and pest attacks.

To ensure increased productivity that would lead to commercialisation of the crop, research will be intensified for high yielding and disease resistant breeds. For the East African Community (EAC) bloc, banana production generates US$ 4.3 billion annually, accounting for 5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

In Tanzania, a total of 760,000 hectares of the crop, one of the major food staples and a leading income for smallholder farmers, was under cultivation in 2016 during which 3.5 million tonnes were produced.

Speaking during the planning meeting on BBB project, the vice chancellor of the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST), Prof Karoli Njau said the pan African university would establish a centre of excellence on banana research. "The centre is geared for improved management in banana production. We will deal with banana pests and diseases," he told agricultural experts from the partner organisations.

He added that although over 50 million people in the East African region depend on highland bananas for their food and income, the average smallholder productivity has remained as low as less than 30%. According to Prof Njau, banana farmers in EA were producing a small portion - about 9% of what is possible - largely due to the devastating impact of pests and diseases.

Zephania is a seasoned Journalist on regional integration matters and the Arusha Bureau Chief for Mwananchi Communications Ltd.

Trial of new bug Spray on Malaria nets in Tanzania sets hopes flying

By Imogen Wilson

Using a new bug spray on bed nets that blocks mosquitoes resistant to current insecticides almost halved malaria infections among children in Tanzania in a study that has boosted hopes of protecting more people from the killer disease.

A trial by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine involving 15,000 children, found using a bed net treated with piperonyl butoxide reduced malaria infections by 44% in the first year compared to nets only treated with pyrethroid. The study comes amid concerns that mosquitoes' ability to resist insecticides is evolving rapidly and spreading across Africa where tools such as insecticide-treated bed nets and insecticide spraying have helped cut malaria cases since 2000.

The trial prompted the World Health Organization (WHO) to revise its recommendations and back wider use of nets sprayed with piperonyl butoxide in areas in Africa where mosquitoes are pyrethroid resistant.

"It's imperative we try and remain one step ahead of insecticide resistance which threatens to reverse the great gains made in combating malaria," researcher Natacha Protopopoff from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine said in a statement.
For although the malaria death toll fell by 62% between 2000 and 2015, there were still an estimated 445,000 deaths in 2016, according to WHO data, with most deaths in children under five in the poorest parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

For the first time in years the WHO reported an increase in malaria cases and no change in the death toll in 2017.

Overall funding for malaria has levelled off since 2010, totalling about US$ 2.9 billion in 2015, but the WHO says a minimum annual investment of US$ 6.5 billion is needed by 2020 to meet targets on controlling malaria by 2030.

Protopopoff said the study in Tanzania involved 48 villages in an area in the north west where high levels of resistance to pyrethroids have been reported.

Mark Rowland, principal investigator from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, described the trial as a "game-changer" that could help community protection.

"This will ensure insecticide treated nets will remain an effective intervention for malaria control, and justify the continued investment and research on alternative insecticides for use on nets," he said in a statement.

Editing by Belinda Goldsmith @BeeGoldsmith and published by Thomson Reuters Foundation

My Mother, My Hero

By Vincent Mathew Massawe

Complaining is never a way to solve problems. Taking responsibility on the issue is a great way to conquer it. The words a hero of my life uses to encourage my four siblings and I. She is strong, brave, caring and loving. Even with the mentioned personality traits I still cannot find any words to express all that she is to us.

A fairly aged lady of class, a public primary school teacher, a mother to five, four of her own and the eldest one a step-daughter that she has raised from the tender age of three with a motherly never ending love. The 11th of July 2006 left a mark on her life, one this day, she was left a widow.

With no one to support her five children, she worked hard as a teacher, but her earnings were not enough to even pay a quarter of her eldest child's tuition fees. She had to work extra hours as a business woman and still be a loving mother in the few hours she could squeeze.

Putting her eldest step-daughter, first born son, and I her second born son through an international level secondary school and thereafter into higher learning institution the likes of Institute of Accountancy Arusha.

Unselfishly, she has sacrificed all she has earned to date. I am seated here today writing this essay only because of the sacrifices she has made for me and my siblings. A tale told in brief to portray the strength of a woman I happily call my Mother. Through the ups and downs she has kept her head up high with an ever-glowing smile, even when times were tough.

Why is my mother my inspiration, one may ask and my answer will always be -the life that my mother leads each and every day. I live to witness her infinite love. She has raised us and provided us with emotional, financial, physical and spiritual support all by herself.

I always find my strength in her for we all know in life we stumble, sometimes we fall but it's the number of times we pick ourselves up, dust off and move on. It is said that, life ain't all sunshine and rainbows.

Last year, I sat under a tree at campus, watching my colleagues making their way to sign up for their end of semester examination. I was not. I was not part of those signing up, as I had not completed my tuition fees.

Two days earlier I had talked to my mother about the situation, and with a shaky voice she tole me, "My son I don't have the money and I don't know where I will get it from but just prepare for the exam for I know God will make way. do you have enough to sustain you through the exam period?". Despite the circumstances, she asked if I had something to last me through the exam week.

A warm tear dripped from my left eye and in that instance I thought this woman was really putting up a fight for me and I should make her proud and stop lamenting over the odds that I might not seat for my exam. I then made a decision, and did two thing. One - get on with thorough preparations as thought I was certain I would sit for the exams, and two - as a back-up plan, I prepared my letter for postponing the oncoming exams, requesting for special exams.

It is examination day and I get a call at 6:00 am, I it is my mother on the other end. "How are you my son, get up and be ready, I'm outside the bank door waiting to make full payment of your fees....". My mind started spinning and everything else she said that morning failed to register.

From that moment, whenever I face difficulty, I always think of all the hardship my mother has gone through to always make a show for me and my siblings and in her I find the strength to get through thick and thin.

To describe a mother would be to write about a hurricane in its perfect power.

To describe a mother would be to write about the climbing and falling colors of a rainbow.

We all are what we are and we owe it to our Mothers, where love begins and never ends.

Vincent is a 3rd Year Computer Science Student at the Arusha Institute of Accountancy.

Rwanda to improve grain quality with US$300,000 storage facility

By John Green

Rwanda is prepared to improve grain quality and recover from the post-harvest losses it has been facing over the past few years with the construction of a grain storage facility. The country has counted over 30 per cent post-harvest losses due to poor storage that has indirectly affected the quality of their crops and propelled food insecurity issues in the country.

The profits of the farmers have been cut short with the same challenge, which has demoralized their status in the individual and corporate level. The government has been left scratching its head on how to make the mountain plain as it seeks to feed its citizens and harness some revenue from the exportation of the crop produce.

The launch of a drying facility will boost the quality as well, and hope to reward the efforts of the farmers in the long-term. With such new measures, the farmers will have a smile on the face as they strive to attain and maintain the market standards for a competitive economy. The post-harvest losses have had a terrible impact on majority of suppliers bringing the capacity to sell more to a stand-still.

One of the most affected crops was maize, which has a high demand in the East African region. A number of countries suffered in 2017 with prolonged drought and inadequate rainfall playing a part. However, poor handling techniques furthered up the catastrophe for both farmers and government.

Farmers can now focus on obtaining quality seeds, and fertilizers from their pockets and not worry on the storage facility that would be extortionate on their end. They will be able to promote food security in good time and ensure they save enough from a robust income. The facility will improve both the quality and quantity of their produce.

The budget for the facility is around US$300,000 that will be sponsored by UN World Food Programme and Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).

John Green is a journalist by profession who holds a degree in Bachelor of Journalism, Broadcast Option and works as an online writer for The Exchange website.

Technology helping East Africa unlock Agriculture potential

By Ruari Phillips

Information technology is being utilised more than ever to improve agriculture in East Africa.

The sector is responsible for 83.9% of imports and 80% of total employment in Ethiopia alone. Technology-led transformation promotes good business practise and encourages farmers to work collaboratively.

On a larger scale, aerial images from satellites, weather forecasts and soil sensors are making it easier to manage crop growth in real time.

Successful ventures have the potential to open up huge markets and are attracting investors from around the globe.

According to African Tech Start-ups Funding Report 2017, agri-tech start-ups across the continent raised a combined total of US$13.2 million last year. Not a huge amount, but certainly an increase on the US$50,000 raised in 2015. It is a sector that has suddenly, and quite dramatically, sprung up. Adding efficiency to the supply chain is only possible when farmers work as a large team and not small groups. In order to bring these people together, the right information needs to be shared openly and on a consistent basis. Companies such as Kenya's HSBS are developing apps available to access via the internet, smart phones or a simple SMS. These include real-time growing news, historical data, payment solutions, HR solutions and even marketing.

"Farming has changed drastically in the 21st Century," said Scott Vaver, CEO of HSBS. "For agriculture to improve in East Africa we need to promote good business skills and make use of the IT channels available. This will help the region grow and become more tech-savvy."

Educating university students on good agri-business is well underway. A number of programmes are in place focused on removing the negative stigma attached to agriculture. Africa's GDP is dominated by farming, so teaching the right expertise now will add huge value. Job opportunities are available in marketing, logistics, administration and management. Giving young farmers an option to purchase and sell through a cooperative is an incentive and promotes social change.

For East Africa to develop, it needs to focus on improving agri-business through technology and not simply subsistence. Planning for the future is the only way to encourage growth, eradicate food wastage, improve poor sales and simplify haphazard supply chains. Just like in banking, where mobile technologies have become essential, agriculture must follow suit. Entrepreneurs across East Africa are seeing the potential in developing new IT systems. Wanda Organic is a Kenyan start-up providing bio-fertilizers to small and medium-sized farmers. Clients can order products by sending a simple SMS with their phone. The company works with commercial businesses to improve efficiency while ensuring value for stakeholders at the same time. The results are evident.

"Productivity from my fruit trees have improved greatly," says Riya Allen, a Wanda Organic client. "Access to fertilizer is faster than it has ever been and it's all at the touch of a button. My prices are good and demand has increased in the market."

By encouraging small hold farmers to work with other plantations, profitability will increase. Cooperatives can collectively purchase sowing seeds, fertiliser and animals. Sharing knowledge is made a lot easier with the right technology as is access to funding and investment. Information about real-time pricing allows farmers to decide whether to buy or hold, and identify the best crops to grow. Micro finance in agri-business has come on leaps and bounds in the last decade and a number of start-ups are giving people quick access to the support they need.

One such company is ProducePay. Founded at Cornell University in 2014, this supply chain start-up aims to fix cash-flow problems by paying for the product the day after it is shipped, rather than the typical 30 - 45 day waiting period. It also offers a trading platform where goods can be bought and sold at a better price.

"The world is facing increasing pressure to answer food demand," said Pablo Schwarzbeck, CEO of ProducePay. "The lack of proper access to financing is one of the premiere inhibitors of farm growth, yet it's one of the least addressed. We are confronting this challenge by creating the first ever means of securitizing fresh perishable produce as a financial asset through the use of technology."

Smart phones are at the forefront of innovation and their ever-increasing affordability is connecting more and more farmers to valuable resources. Through various platforms and social media applications, workers can access education about a range of agricultural topics. In addition, farming communities can communicate with each other about best practices. Translation services on web browsers give people information in their language.

Weather and climate has always been an issue for Africa's agricultural sector and the major benefit of connectivity is availability of weather information and geographical data. Soil conditions can be monitored via a mobile phone or computer. Farmers can use this information to determine what to grow and when to harvest crops. People can also access news about the length of the growing seasons for crops, and the risks (e.g. droughts, floods, and extreme storms) they might encounter. Geographic data provides valuable data on pests and animal diseases.

Agriculture is one of the largest industries but also the most untapped by technology. It's a huge market that touches just about everyone so opportunities are endless. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) predicts the size of the market in Sub-Saharan Africa will grow to US$1 trillion by 2030. Scalable, digital platforms could run at 50 to 100 per cent annualised growth rates over the next three to five years.

Aerial imagery is another area making strong headway through developing technology. Although it has been around for decades, up until now the service hasn't provided any real value. Farmers need to know why certain crops are weak, and not just where. Thankfully, a number of new advancements are turning aerial imagery into information that can be analysed to predict future outcomes. Growers can select how frequently they would like to receive analysed images each month, and pay according.

Clearly there are more pressing issues than just technology to be addressed in East Africa's agriculture sector. At the same time, new concepts like precision farming, crop efficiency and vertical farming bring a breath of fresh air to the field. Real problems are being tackled head-on. Funding is increasingly available and without doubt, digital technology has the potential to innovate all parts of the food system in a very good way.

The Rise of the EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

By The Community Team

Since its establishment, the East African Community has made steady progress based on the series of its Development Strategies. Among the significant achievements are those in confidence building measures and harmonization of Partner States' policies and programmes.

A primary objective is to reinforce a common East African identity within the vision of a fully integrated East Africa.

Recently, the EAC attained international recognition as the fastest growing Regional Economic Bloc in Africa. This was reported by the UK's Guardian Newspaper. This recognition was a result of the major accomplishments the EAC has attained in the recent past.

The EAC also emerged as the fastest integrating Regional Economic Community (REC) in the Continent according to the Africa Regional Integration Index Report 2016, jointly carried out by African Union Commission, African Development Bank and the United Nations Commission for Africa.

According to the study, which covered eight recognized RECs in Africa, EAC emerged the best performing in Regional Integration.

For more than 18 years since the inception of EAC, the following sectors recorded a number of achievements in efforts to improve the wellbeing of the people of East Africa as follows;

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

One Stop Border Posts

Through the coordination of the Secretariat and funding from Partner States and Development Partners several achievements have been attained in terms of construction and operationalization of One Stop Border Posts (OSBPs) in the EAC region.

To date, out of the 15 borders earmarked to operate as OSBPs, 12 have been completed and 10 are operational. The completed OSBPs are: Gasenyi/Nemba, Ruhwa, Rusumo, Lunga Lunga/Horohoro, Holili/Taveta, Kagitumba/Mirama Hills, Mutukula, Kabanga/Kobero, Malaba, Isebania/Sirari, Busia and Namanga. Construction is on-going for the Katuna/Gatuna OSBP.

The 10 operational OSBPs are: Gasenyi/Nemba, Ruhwa, Rusumo, Holili/Taveta, Kagitumba/Mirama Hills, Mutukula, Kabanga/Kobero, Malaba, Busia and Namanga. However, OSBP operations at Ruhwa have been temporarily suspended.

In order to support the operationalization and functioning of the OSBPs several instruments and frameworks have been prepared. Such supporting instruments include;

- The East African One Stop Border Posts Act, 2016;
- The East African One Stop Border Posts Regulations, 2017;
- The EAC OSBP Procedures Manual;
- OSBP Performance Measurement Guide which is under preparation;
- The OSBP training curriculum which is also under preparation; and
- OSBP Source Book.

Following the construction and operationalization of OSBPs, notable trade facilitation gains have been registered, namely:

1. time and cost savings at border crossings for both passengers and freight ;
2. improved information exchange;
3. improved working environment for border officials; and
4. improved safety and security for cross-border traffic.

Available information indicates that the conversion of Malaba Border into an OSBP has resulted into substantial time saving for cargo processing from 24hrs to 4hrs only leading into cost savings amounting to more than US$70 million per annum (Fitzmaurice and Hartman, 2013). Efforts are underway to package Phase II OSBP Program for additional OSBPs within EAC and with neighboring non-EAC countries and RECs.

Roads Sub-Sector

In May, 2017, construction of the Taveta – Mwatate road, which is 90 km long and is part of the multinational Arusha – Holili/Taveta – Voi road, was substantially completed. It now takes one and a half hours to cover the distance, from the previous four hours when it was a gravel road. On the Tanzanian side, the dualling of the Sakina – Tengeru section, 14 km long, is now complete and construction of the 42-km long Arusha Bypass is ongoing. Further, the detailed design studies for the 400-km long Malindi – Lunga Lunga and Tanga – Bagamoyo road between Kenya and Tanzania are complete.

In addition, the feasibility studies and detailed designs of two key links for the Republics of Rwanda and Burundi to the Central Corridor commenced in April, 2016. One project is the 250-km long Nyakanazi – Kasulu – Manyovu road in Tanzania linking to the 78-km long Rumonge –Bujumbura road in Burundi. The other is the 92-km long Lusahunga – Rusumo road in Tanzania linking to the 70-km long Kayonza – Kigali road in Rwanda. The studies were completed in December 2017.

These studies are funded by the AfDB through a US$2.2 million grant to the EAC Secretariat. Likewise, in November 2017, EAC Secretariat signed a financing Agreement with AfDB for a grant amounting US$1.5 million for studies for the Uganda/Tanzania Multinational roads: Masaka – Mutukula / Mutukula-Kyaka &Bugene – Kasulo -Kumunazi

Railways

The construction of the Mombasa-Nairobi standard gauge railway line in Kenya is complete and operational. The construction of the Nairobi-Naivasha section has also commenced. Similarly, construction of the new standard gauge railway of the Kampala-Malaba section in Uganda have commenced. For the Central Corridor, the construction of the Dar-es-Salam-Morogoro section commenced in April, 2017.

The Secretariat completed the study known as The EAC Railways Sector Enhancement Project in August, 2016. The study has made recommendations on new priority lines and has proposed institutional reforms aimed at improving the railways sector in the region. To facilitate the development and operation of seamless and efficient railway transport services in the region, the Secretariat has developed technical specifications for rail infrastructure and appropriate regulations for safety, inter-operability and access management. These await the development of appropriate legal frameworks to anchor their implementation.

TOURISM AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Tourism is one of the most important economic sectors for countries in the Region and therefore one of the main areas of co-operation among the East Africa Community (EAC) Partner States. The sector contributes between 7.5% to 10% to GDP of EAC Partner States and accounts for a significant proportion of the employment in the region.

As stipulated by Article 115 of the EAC Treaty, the Partner States undertake to develop a collective and coordinated approach to the promotion and marketing of quality tourism into and within the Community. In line with this, various regional efforts have been made towards promoting the region as a single tourist destination.

Common classification criteria for tourist accommodation facilities and restaurants

Most notable is the harmonization of standards of tourism facilities whereby common classification criteria for various types of tourist accommodation establishments, that is, town hotels, lodges, tented camps, motels, villas, cottages, self-serviced apartments. A classification criterion for rest aurants has also been developed.

The EAC Classification criteria was adopted by Partner States and has so far been implemented by the Republics of Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. Assessors have been trained in all Partner States except South Sudan to undertake assessment of the tourism establishments. Currently there is a pool of 71 trained assessors who can be used in any Partner States. Common classification criteria enable standardization of tourism related services which in turn enhances competitiveness and promotion of East Africa as a single tourist destination.

Joint Marketing of East Africa as a Single Tourist Destination in International Tourism Trade Fairs

The Secretariat and Partner States have jointly been participating in the key international tourism trade fairs, that is, World Travel Market in London (UK) and International Tourism Bourse in Berlin (Germany) since 2008. World Travel Market and International Tourism Bourse are the largest tourism trade fairs attracting over 50,000 participants and thus offer the Secretariat and Partner States an opportunity to reach out to international tour travel agents, international media and consumers. During the Fairs, a joint promotion event is coordinated and organized by the Secretariat whereby the Partner States give a joint statement projecting East Africa as a single tourist destination.

EAC Regional Strategy to Combat Poaching and Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products

With the support of USAID, the EAC Secretariat developed a Regional Strategy to Combat Poaching, Illegal Trade and Trafficking of Wildlife and Wildlife Products. The strategy is currently beung implemented by the Parter States.

QMS CERTIFICATION

The EAC Secretariat commenced the rolling out of a Quality Management System (QMS) at the EAC Secretariat with the aim of strengthening and improving internal processes for efficiency & effectiveness. A pilot phase of introducing the QMS within the Directorate of Planning started in September 2011 that led to the streamlining of EAC Planning processes as well as seven other divisions in 2012.

EAC SECETARIAT IS THE FIRST RGIONAL INTRGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION IN AFRICA TO BE ISO 9001:2008 CERTIFIED

Top 10 benefits

1. Meet legal and regulatory requirements
2. Improved customer satisfaction
3. Improved operational efficiency
4. Reduces re-duplication of work
5. Integration and alignment of internal processes which led to increased productivity
6. Increase employee motivation and participation
7. Continual improvement
8. Consistency in the delivery of our services
9. Improved communication, planning and administration of processes.
10. Improved corporate image of the EAC

A total of 448 working documents (processes, procedures, manuals, forms and work aids were documented, controlled and implemented – laying the foundation for **institutional memory retention** and continual improvement. The EACS is now **easily process auditable!**

EAC Secretariat is the first regional intergovernmental organization in Africa to be ISO 9001:2008 Certified.

The Secretariat is armed with a tool for supporting internal control, process problem solving and continual improvement. Process KPIs Tracker provides a Process Performance Perspective of the EACS

Council recognized and commended EAC Secretariat for undertaking the initiative to improve its operation through implementation of QMS

A Substantive QMS Focal Officer was recruited at the end of 2016, funded by the EACS as Management Representative - a Key resource for sustainability of QMS

EACS Passed Fiduciary Risk Assessment - Partly attributed to ISO Certification of Directorate of Finance

EDUCATION

Common Higher Education Area

The East African Community was declared a Common Higher Education Area by the 18th Summit of the EAC Heads of State on 20th May 2017, in Dar es Salaam Tanzania.

What is a Common Higher Education Area?

A Common Higher Education Area is a geographic area that brings together sovereign states with mutual interest and common goal in the development of higher education characterised by comparable, compatible, coherent and harmonised systems of higher education. The objectives of the Common Higher Education Area include among others include: Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable qualifications; Facilitation of a system of credits as an effective mechanism of promoting students mobility, recognition of leaners' study work load and qualifications therefrom; Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement; and Promotion of cooperation in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development and harmonization of academic programmes, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes, training systems and research.

What does the East African Common Higher Education Area entail?

The East African Community Common Higher Education Area (EACHEA) entails the establishment of a common frame of reference to facilitate comparability, compatibility and mutual recognition of higher education and training systems. It encompasses qualifications attained among the EAC Partner States, which are based on shared views on quality, criteria, standards and learning outcomes, for promoting students and labour mobility in the EAC.

Instruments of the EACHEA

The instruments facilitating the implementation of a Common Higher Education Area were developed by the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) through consultative and participatory processes in collaboration with the national commissions and councils for university/ higher education by involving other key stakeholders in higher education in the region. These instruments include: Regional Quality Assurance System, comprising a number of policies and guidelines; Principles and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in East Africa; East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education; Students' Mobility Policy; and Benchmarks for Academic Programmes.

Implementation

The implementation of the EACHEA is a continuous and progressive process that will require the participation and contribution of various stakeholders at different levels in higher education in the region as follows:

1. The EAC Council of Ministers will provide an overall oversight at the highest political level in the operationalization in all the EAC Partner States;

2. IUCEA has the responsibility of coordinating the operationalization of the Common Higher Education Area at the regional level by involving key stakeholders in the region;

3. National Councils/Commissions for Higher/University Education have the responsibility of following up the implementation and adoption of the EACHEA policies and instruments by the Higher learning institutions in their respective countries and provide mechanisms for enforcement within their mandates; and

4. Higher learning institutions have the responsibility of adopting and adapting all policies and guidelines that will allow them to be part and parcel of the EACHEA.

CUSTOMS AND TRADE

EAC as a Single Customs Territory

The transformation of EAC into a Single Customs Territory (SCT) is a major and final step in the realization of one of the pillars of the East African Community integration agenda – establishment of a Customs Union. Since January 2014 the EAC has incrementally rolled-out cargo on the SCT. In December 2017 all goods were rolled onto the SCT. The SCT is where the goods are entered once they reach the first point of entry into the Community and taxes are assessed and paid in the destination Partner State. The benefits of the SCT are already being witnessed by both the public and the private sectors in the region.

With the Single Customs Territory regional customer-centric procedures have been put in place eliminating duplications and reducing the cost of doing business. So far the following has been achieved;

- The region has fully embraced the Single Customs Territory;

- Both export and import procedures have been developed and applied;

- Regional bond has been introduced eliminating the dependence on multiple national bonds - securing goods used to be a nightmare in the past where at every point of entry and exit you had to acquire and discharge bonds;

- Regional ECT is now being applied to secure transfer and transit of goods across the region;

- Use of technology in the clearance process has been enhanced benefiting both business and government administrations;

- Cooperation and collaboration among government agencies, government officials and stakeholders has improved. This has been realized through the mode of operation of the SCT which requires all stakeholders to be involved in the clearance process;

- Economies of scale, synergy, efficiency and effectiveness in the clearance process is being realized through the deployment of staff by Partner States to first points of entry particularly Dar es Salaam and Mombasa Ports;

- Supply of sensitive products like fuel to hinterland Partner States is more certain than before the SCT;

- The turn-around time from Mombasa or Dar es Salaam to Kampala or Kigali/ Bujumbura has been reduced from over 18 days to an average of 4 days; and

- New skills have been acquired and capacity build that is running the region as one single customs territory.

ENERGY

East African Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

On June 11, 2016 the East African Community officially launched the East African Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy efficiency (EACREEE) at Makerere University College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT).

The Overall Objective of the Centre is to contribute towards increased access to modern, affordable and reliable energy services by creating an enabling environment for renewable energy and energy efficiency markets and investments.

The Secretariat for EACREEE is now operational.

Implementation of the East African Power Master Plan

The EAC, in collaboration with Partner States, has continued the implementation of projects under the Power Master Plan with success. The capacity balances of Partner States show that all the Partner States' generation capacities exceed their peak demands and the surpluses will rise to significant levels when committed generation projects are commissioned from about 555MW in 2017 to about 7,014MW by 2021. There is, therefore, need to stimulate electricity demand in the region.

Various efforts are on-going to increase access to modern energy services in the region. The EAC Secretariat and other Regional Organizations namely the Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Programme (NELSAP), Eastern Africa Power Pool (EAPP) and Energy for the Great Lakes (EGL), continued to monitor the implementation of interconnection projects that will facilitate power exchange between Partner States.

INDUSRIALISATION

Industrialisation in the context of EAC region depends on how the region strategically leverages from the market created by the Common Market Protocol as a source or stimulus for demand. The realisation of a fully functioning Common Market and the deepening of regional integration through a monetary union are crucial for providing the much-needed impetus for industrialisation in the region.

Implementation of the Summit Directives on Textiles, Leather and Automotive Sectors

The EAC is currently implementing Summit directives which directed the Council of Ministers to study the modalities for the promotion of textiles and leather industries in the region as well as mechanisms for stopping the importation of used clothes, shoes and other leather products from outside the region, further study the modalities for promotion of motor vehicle assembly in the region with the aim of reducing the importation of used motor vehicles from outside the community. Partner States have also started implementing the Summit directives, for example Republic of Rwanda has already introduced total ban on the importation of second hand shoes and clothes. Other Partner states are working on the modalities of implementing these directives.

Launch of the EAC Industrial Competitiveness Report

The EAC Industrial Competitiveness Report (EAC-ICR 2017) aims at positioning EAC region's industrial sector on the international scene by benchmarking its performance and capability against other comparators; and providing a compass to policy-makers, the private sector (in particular manufacturing associations), and generally a wider audience of stakeholders interested and/or involved in industry on the broad direction of the industrial development trajectory of the EAC as a whole and of the internal dynamics among Partner States.

EAC Industrial Competitiveness Report marks an encouraging achievement to the EAC as it begins further steps towards attaining another 5-year plan as part and parcel of the implementation of the EAC Industrial Policy 2012-2032.

AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

Cooperation in agriculture and food security features prominently in the EAC integration process. The economies and livelihoods of people in East Africa are predominantly dependent on agriculture. The sector accounts for 25%-40% of EAC Partner States' Gross Domestic Product and is a leading employer for over 80 percent of the population in the region. The EAC Food Security Action Plan adopted by the Summit in 2011 has guided coordination and implementation of flagship projects and programmes aimed at catalyzing agricultural transformation.

Progress made on several fronts include development of governance instruments for strengthening regional coordination of the sector; enhancing food and nutrition security and safety; and interventions to promote agricultural value chains in the areas of crops, livestock and fisheries. These instruments include the EAC Food and Nutrition Security Policy and the EAC Livestock Policy.

EAC Aflatoxin Programme

Aflatoxin contamination of key staple crops including maize and groundnuts is one of the formidable sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) challenges posing a threat to human and animal health in the region. The EAC Secretariat has stepped up interventions on aflatoxin prevention and control. A robust evidence-based regional Aflatoxin Strategy and Action Plan has been developed to mitigate the adverse effects of aflatoxin along the food and feed value chains.

EAC SPS Programme

Sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) is an agreement under the World Trade Organization (WTO) focusing on how governments can apply food safety, animal, fish and plant health measures and regulations. In 2013, The EAC SPS Protocol was adopted by the Council of Ministers. The objectives of the Protocol encompass protection of human, animal and plant health and promotion of trade in food and agricultural commodities within the Community and between the Community and other trading partners.

The EAC is the first Regional Economic Community to launch such measures on the African continent. SPS Measures on plant health, animal health and food and feed safety were finalized in March 2016. This has paved the way for the development of EAC legal framework on SPS. Already a detailed road map for implementation of the EAC SPS measures has been developed and efforts are underway to initiate the development of the regional SPS Bill.

The Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP)

The Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), under the African Union, is Africa's policy framework for agricultural transformation, wealth creation, food security & nutrition, economic growth and prosperity for all. The development and adoption of EAC CAADP Compact is a key milestone in line with the African Union Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agriculture Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods. The Secretariat is now spearheading the finalization of the EAC CAADP Results Framework. It is an important instrument that will be used in tracking and measuring impacts and outcomes of the interventions resulting from implementation of the EAC CAADP. In addition, the development of EAC CAADP Agricultural Investment Plan (RAIP) is its final stages.

Harmonization of Registration of Veterinary Vaccines

In an effort to ease access to and use of vaccines for control of diseases, the EAC has developed Mutual Recognition Procedures for registration of animal vaccines. This is aimed at supporting the livestock sector in the region by enhancing access to vaccines for management of disease.

Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) of Veterinary Professionals

EAC Partner States have undertaken to mutually recognize the academic and professional qualifications granted, experience obtained, requirements met, licenses or certificates granted in other Partner States as provided for in Article 76 of the Treaty establishing EAC and in particular Article 11 of the Common Market Protocol (CMP). This initiative aims at promoting trade in services within the EAC. The Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) will contribute towards augmenting the important roles that Veterinary services play in promoting economic growth, developing export potential and securing public health in East Africa through prevention and control of animal diseases.

Enhancing Access to Information and Data

EAC has established and operationalized online systems to foster information exchange and support evidenced-based decision-making. The two systems are the Regional Food Balance Sheet (RFBS) and the Animal Resources Data Base (ARIS2). The RFBS generates information about staple foods produced and traded in the EAC Partner States in order to ensure food security and facilitate trade. The ARIS database is an important tool for generation of data and information to guide decision-making and influence policy actions on strategic investments in the livestock and fisheries sub- sectors.

LAKE VICTORIA BASIN COMMISSION

The Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) has transformed the vision and strategy framework of the stakeholders in the Lake Victoria Basin, into a number of programs as part of a broader agenda to strengthen shared interest and regional cooperation. Among these programs is the Lake Victoria Water and Sanitation (LVWATSAN) initiative which has the overall objective of supporting secondary urban centres in the basin to meet the water and sanitation related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and contribute to the improvement of the lake's environment and ecological system. The first phase of this program was implemented in ten towns in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.

The African Development Bank Group has been supporting the five Governments of the EAC Partner States in their development efforts, and in this project a grant of approximately US$108 million was approved in December 2010 to finance the Lake Victoria Water Supply and Sanitation (LVWATSAN) Program Phase II. This was about 89% of the project financing while the Partner States of the EAC were contributing 11% (US$13.35 million)

The objective of the program is to contribute to the improvement of the livelihoods and health of communities in the basin, through the reversal of the pollution of the lake, improvements in sustainable water supply and sanitation infrastructure.

The program focuses on the following components;

1. Development of sustainable water supply systems;
2. Provision of hygiene and sanitation facilities including solid waste management systems and social marketing;
3. Drainage improvements; and
4. Capacity building to town councils and service providers.

When fully implemented, the program will significantly reduce the waste entering Lake Victoria and hence improve the ecosystem of the Lake.

Achievements to date

Current Specific achievements for each component include the following:

WATER SUPPLY	HYGIENE & SANITATION
Construction of about 578.52 kms of water transmission system; Construction of 35 public fountains; Rehabilitation of 5 and construction of 10 new water treatment plants; Construction of 42 water tanks; and Drilling of 41 boreholes;	Construction of 102 public toilets; Supply of 17 exhausters; Supply of 8 Ugotougs; Supply of 392 skips; and Supply of 29 tractors and trailers.
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT	**TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING**
Supply of motor vehicles for all IAs and Towns; Supply of motorbikes for the towns; and Supply of ICT equipment and office furniture for all the PMUs.	Technical assistance was provided to the PMUs and utilities; An analysis of the existing water tariff structures carried out; Capacity enhancement on solid waste management in Tanzania; Business Plans for Faecal Sludge Management; and Establishment and operationalization of the Town Project Teams (TPTs) and Multi- Stakeholder Forums (MSFs).

EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY'S MANDATE IN STRENGTHENING INTEGRATION

The East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) is the Legislative arm of the East African Community (EAC). The EALA was inaugurated in November 2001, in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania. Under Chapter 9 of the Treaty, EALA is mandated with core functions of Legislation, approval of the EAC budget, Representation and Oversight.

EALA, which is made up of nine elected Members per Partner State, also interfaces with the National Legislatures/Assemblies of the Partner States on EAC matters and consults with the Council of Ministers on the implementation of the EAC Treaty. The hallmark of the Assembly includes debate and enactment of Bills, adoption of Resolutions as well as in raising Questions and debate of Committee reports as per the provisions of Article 49 and 59 of the EAC Treaty.

Since its inception in 2001, EALA has served as a key link between the Institutions of the East African Community and the people of East Africa. It has similarly provided a forum for Civil Society, the Private Sector and other non-state actors within the region to advocate for, inter alia, the promotion of the ideals of good governance; accountability; democracy; rule of law and respect for human rights.

Over the last 17 years, the Assembly has realized tremendous achievements. The scorecard of the third Assembly can be summarized as follows:

1. Passage of 79 Bills - many of which are already assented to and are in force. Currently, 21 Bills are undergoing the process of assent. Once assented to, the Laws take precedence over the national laws on matters of the purview of the Community.
2. Debate, approval and passage of 262 Reports.
3. Adoption of 130 key Resolutions. A key Resolution passed by the 3rd Assembly is that of recognizing Kiswahili as one of the Official languages of the Community.
4. Receipt, debate and processing of 15 Petitions.
5. Enhanced Oversight of the EAC programmes and projects.
6. Enhanced sensitization activities in the Partner States.
7. Revision of the Rules of Procedure and other instruments of governance to strengthen service delivery.

THE EAST AFRICAN COURT OF JUSTICE

Ensuring adherence to law in the Community

Since its inauguration in November 2001 the Court has received one hundred and fifty two (152) substantive cases and one hundred and thirty (130) interim applications making a total of two hundred and eighty two (282) cases. Out of these cases the Court has heard and determined one hundred and nine (109) substantive cases and one hundred and twenty one (121) applications making a total of two hundred and thirty (230) cases determined. Pending before it are 43 substantive matters and 9 interim applications, which is a smaller number, compared to the cases determined.

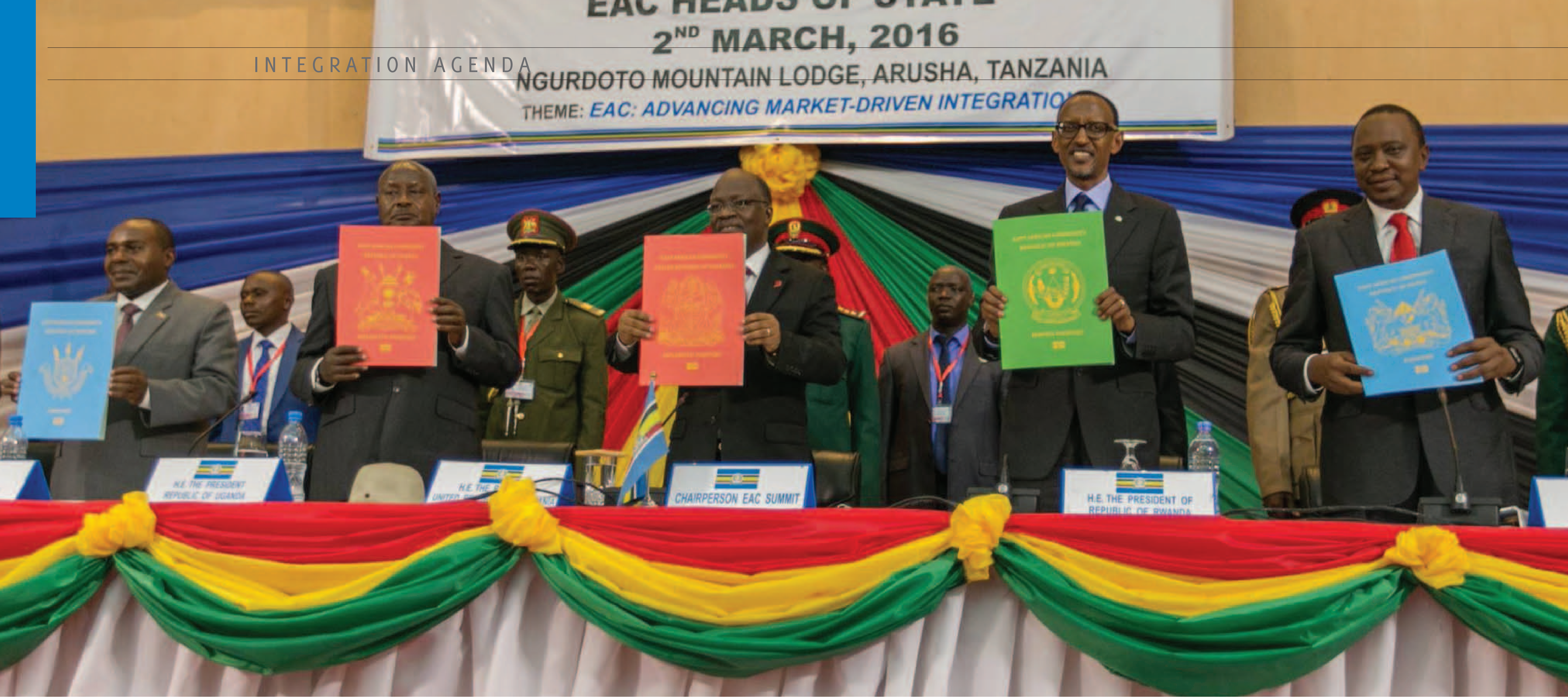
Enhanced accessibility to the Court

In 2012 the Court established five sub-registries in five capitals in the Partner States namely: Bujumbura, Nairobi, Kigali, Kampala and Dar-es-salaam within the National Court Premises. The establishment of the sub registries was a practical arrangement to improve the Court's accessibility by bringing justice closer to the people and thus saving the litigants time and cost of filing cases. This has immensely contributed to the improvement of the visibility of the Court within Partner States. Court filing fees for litigants was waived thus making it cheap to access the Court.

Efficient Management of Cases

The Court acquired a Case Management and Recording System whose implementation and operationalization has provided secure, reliable and integrated technology solutions in management of cases. The system was developed with the capability of e-filing, which allows stakeholders to file cases electronically. The ultimate goal is to become a paperless Court.

The Court currently has 11 Judges with each Partner State having two Judges except the Republic of South Sudan pending the amendments of the Treaty. The Court also continues to offer sensitization lectures to universities law schools and to national law societies. This is besides providing trainings on the Court's Rules of Procedures to State Attorneys and soon to private practitioners.



East African International e-Passport:

What EAC Citizens should look forward to

By Stephen Niyonzima

An Electronic Passport (e-Passport) features microchip technology containing an integrated circuit (chip) within its pages. The chip contains the data that are essential in verifying the identity of the passport holder. These data include the personal data found on the data page of the passport, the biometrics of the passport holder, a unique chip identification number, and a digital signature to verify the authenticity of the data stored on the chip. The chip technology allows the information stored in an e-Passport to be read by special chip readers at a close distance.

The standards for the e-Passport have been established by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and are followed by all countries implementing e-Passports. Therefore, the new International East African e-Passport allows information stored on the chip to be verified with the information visually displayed on the passport. It contains an integrated photograph of the holder, a digitized secondary photo and an electronic signature of the holder. It contains overt and hidden security features such as Invisible Personal Information (IPI), letter screen, micro printing and Ultra Violet (UV) reactive ink, among other things. The EA e-Passport replaces the machine-readable East African and Ordinary Passports issued by the Partner States and is available in the diplomatic, service and ordinary categories. The diplomatic passport is red in colour, service green and sky blue for the ordinary passports.

Background

The initiative of introducing an East African e-Passport can be traced way back to 1997 when the then Permanent Tripartite Commission directed the EAC Secretariat to introduce an East African Passport to enhance movement across national borders by East Africans. The EA Passport was subsequently introduced as a document to facilitate the movement of East Africans in the region with Partner States commencing issuance of the passport in December 1998.

In 2003, a Technical Committee was constituted by Partner States to work out modalities to internationalize the East African Passport. The report of the Technical working group was considered by the meeting of the Chiefs of Immigration held in March 2003 and later, by the Sectoral Committee on the Facilitation on the Movement of Persons, Immigration, Labour and Refugee Management.

Consequently, the 7th Meeting of the EAC Council of Ministers held on 30th January, 2004 directed that the commencement date for the internationalization of the East African Passport be 1st January, 2005. However, this date could not be actualized since Partner States had not exhausted their existing national stocks. Partner States therefore decided to prepare for printing the new generation East African Passports in December 2010.

In January 2012, the EAC Secretariat convened a meeting of Immigration experts to design the new generation machine-readable EA e-Passport. The experts developed technical specifications and designs were considered and endorsed by the Chiefs of Immigration in March 2012.

The 29th Meeting of the Council of Ministers held on 20th September, 2014, adopted the computer-generated New Generation East African e-passport sample designs for the Diplomatic, Service and Ordinary e-Passports (EAC/CM 29/Decision 09). This marked the first stage of upgrading the first generation EAC Passport which was regional with regard to usage into an internationally acceptable travel document.

Later, the 17th Ordinary Summit of the EAC Heads of State launched the New International EA e-Passport on 2nd March, 2016 and directed Partner States to commence issuance of the New EA e-Passport by 1st January, 2017 and implement the phase out programme for the current machine-readable East African and National Passports from 1st January, 2017 to 31st December, 2018. The Summit also directed Partner States to undertake awareness creation and continuous outreach programmes on the new International EA e-Passport.

The 35th meeting of the Council of Ministers held on 4th April, 2017, considered the status of Partner States preparedness by then to commence issuance of the EA International e-Passport. The Council noted that the Republic of South Sudan would be ready to commence the issuance of the EA e-Passport at a later date, and directed Partner States to commence the issuance of the EA e-Passport by 31st January, 2018.

Status of Implementation by Partner States

The meeting of Chiefs of Immigration held from 21st to 22nd September, 2016 developed criteria against which Partner States would report the status of preparedness to commence issuance of the EA e-Passport. The reporting criteria has the following component areas: Specification and design; domestication of designs and specifications; procurement of EA e-Passport booklets; Infrastructure Preparedness (upgrading or procurement of new machines); System Development, Integration and Deployment; Connectivity Infrastructure Preparedness; Legal and Regulatory Environment Readiness, and; Publicity Preparedness. In accordance with the criteria agreed upon by the 35th Meeting of the Council held on 4th April, 2017, the following is the status of Partner States readiness to commence issuance of the EA International e-Passport:

Burundi approved and domesticated the EAC designs and specifications of the International EA e-Passport. Burundi has through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement, completed the process of procuring the EA e-Passport booklets and the Infrastructure necessary to implement the EA e-Passport has been established. The sensitization programmes on the new EA e-Ppassport were being implemented by the Immigration department in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry in the Presidency in charge of EAC Affairs. Therefore, the Republic of Burundi is in final stages on the issuance of the International EA e-Passport.

Kenya commenced the issuance of the EA e-Passport with effect from 1st September, 2017. The production of ordinary and the EA national machine readable passports ceased on 1st September, 2017, leaving the department of immigration with a backlog of 16,000 applications. Therefore, the 16,000 applicants will be required to provide biometric data in order to receive the EA e-Passport. To operationalize the EA e- Passport, applications will be made at the Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu immigration offices. However, processing will be at Immigration headquarters before the documents are couriered back to the stations.

Tanzania launched the commencement of issuance of the EA e-Passport on 31st January, 2018 and has rolled out the new EA e-Passports replacing the existing national machine readable EA and national passports, set to be phased out by January 2020. The launch was witnessed by President John Magufuli who said the e-Passport would be a lasting solution to a number of challenges associated with immigration services in the country. Tanzania becomes the second EAC Partner State to roll out the EA e-Passport after Kenya which launched the EA e- Passport on 1st September 2017. The country also complied with the set date of 31st January, 2018 as had been directed by the 35th Meeting of the Council.

Rwanda initiated a tender to procure both the systems and booklets for the EA e-Passport and is now under the final stages of contract signing. A Cabinet Paper on the EA e-Passport modalities including: categories, validity and key features were approved on 12th October, 2016. The legal framework has been revised to include Kiswahili as an official language. The infrastructure required for all e-Passport issuance offices has been established and online services are made available to Rwandan citizens residing in the country and in the Diaspora. Awareness of the issuance of the EA e-Passport started through print and social media. The country is in final stages to commence the issuance of the EA e- Passport.

Uganda is utilizing the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode of financing the production of the EA e-Passport booklets and other prospective developers intending to invest in security printing industry. The exercise of screening the prospective investors in the sector is currently on going and it is envisaged the selected partner will supply of EA e-Passport booklets. The new machines/hardware has been installed and the proposed central and remote sites are connected with data link infrastructure, personalization facilities and Systems development. Public education programmes are being undertaken in conjunction with the Ministry of East African Community Affairs. Uganda is at advanced stages of commencing the issuance of the EA e-Passport.

Benefits

The issuance of the EA e-Passport to the nationals of the EAC Partner States will portray the image of "East Africaness" in pursuit to the realization of One People, One Destiny.

The EA e-passport is embedded with a machine-readable computer chip which contains the holder's biometric information on a tamper-proof page, and has been touted as a major step in curbing fraud and easing clearance at international airports where e-readers are installed.

The EA e-Passport will be used beyond the EAC Partner States and will enable the EAC Partner States comply with ICAO Standards. Globally, there are over 100 countries implementing e-Passports and the EAC Partner States being ICAO Members are actualizing this global initiative.

Furthermore, the EA e-Passport is endowed with benefits that will include: allowing East Africans to travel to any destination in the world; compliance with Information, Technology and Communication (ICT) requirements thereby leading to reduction of costs on paperwork, and; efficiency in the provision of immigration services. In addition, Partner States will have greater confidence and acceptance of the EA e-Passport since it is enriched with biometric features.

The EA e-Passport is secure and cannot be easily forged, reproduced or altered and its database is enhanced with Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) to minimize fraud, identity theft, forgery and passport scanning. The EA e-Passport also contains a biometric identifier and bears a digital photograph of the holder as well as digital security features to prevent unauthorized reading or scanning of the data stored.

Stephen is a Principal Labour and Immigration Officer at the EAC Secretariat.

The African Continental Free Trade Area: Moving African Integration Further Forward

By Dr Ibrahim Assane Mayaki

Twenty years ago, I hoped for an Africa that would draw closer and forge forward boldly, despite a bag of mixed fortunes. Rwanda had just been blighted by genocide; the ubiquitous coup d'état still reared its ugly head in West Africa; although a tentative calm prevailed in Central Africa, political tensions simmered below the surface; Zaïre was in the throes of the 'first Congo war'; the civil war in Somalia grew in magnitude and intensity; Ethiopia began an experiment in state-led macroeconomic planning; a democratic South Africa rose from the ashes of Apartheid, a veritable validation of the OAU's ultimate goal of political liberation for Africa.

An interim period of positive change ensued, a growth fuelled by new media including the Internet, greater multiculturalism and a stronger attachment to democratic principles.

In March 2018, 44 of the 55 African Union Heads of State and Government enacted the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement (AfCFTA) in Kigali, Rwanda at its 10th Extraordinary Session, under the able leadership of H.E. President Mahamadou Issoufou of Niger, with H.E. President Paul Kagame of Rwanda as current AU Chairperson and H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the AU Commission.

Once in force AfCFTA will be the largest trade zone in the world, increase intra-African trade by 52% by the year 2022, remove tariffs on 90% of goods, liberalise services and tackle other barriers to intra-African trade, such as long delays at border posts.

The end of colonialism in the early 1960s created 55 African countries, which cut arbitrarily across ethnic, cultural and traditional boundaries. They established the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to promote unity and solidarity on one hand yet emphasised territorial sovereignty on the other. This hamstrung the OAU insofar as national affairs were concerned, and helped create regional economic blocks or communities (RECs) in the mid-1970s.

RECs engendered political and economic integration. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the East African Community (EAC) signed agreements for the free movement of goods, services and people. There are now 8 AU-recognised RECs and a number of sub-regional bodies that are actively pursuing Africa's integration agenda.

In 1991 the Abuja Treaty established the African Economic Community (AEC), building on RECs for integration. At the 2001 OAU Summit, African Heads of States and Government adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a further vector to accelerate African economic co-operation and integration. The Summit recognised the importance of OAU input into REC programme planning and implementation. In 2002, the Constitutive Act of the AU was adopted in Lomé, Togo, formally replacing the OAU.

These milestones show that African economic integration is best pursued on a regional basis.

Rethinking Africa's priorities is urgently called for. In this regard Agenda 2063, a consolidated strategy for sustained political and economic integration and prosperity, was launched by African Heads of State and Government at the 50th Anniversary of African Unity in 2013. Agenda 2063's first Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2013-2023) draws heavily on NEPAD's experiences. Beyond these broad strokes in development priorities and programmes, African development must be translated into concrete action.

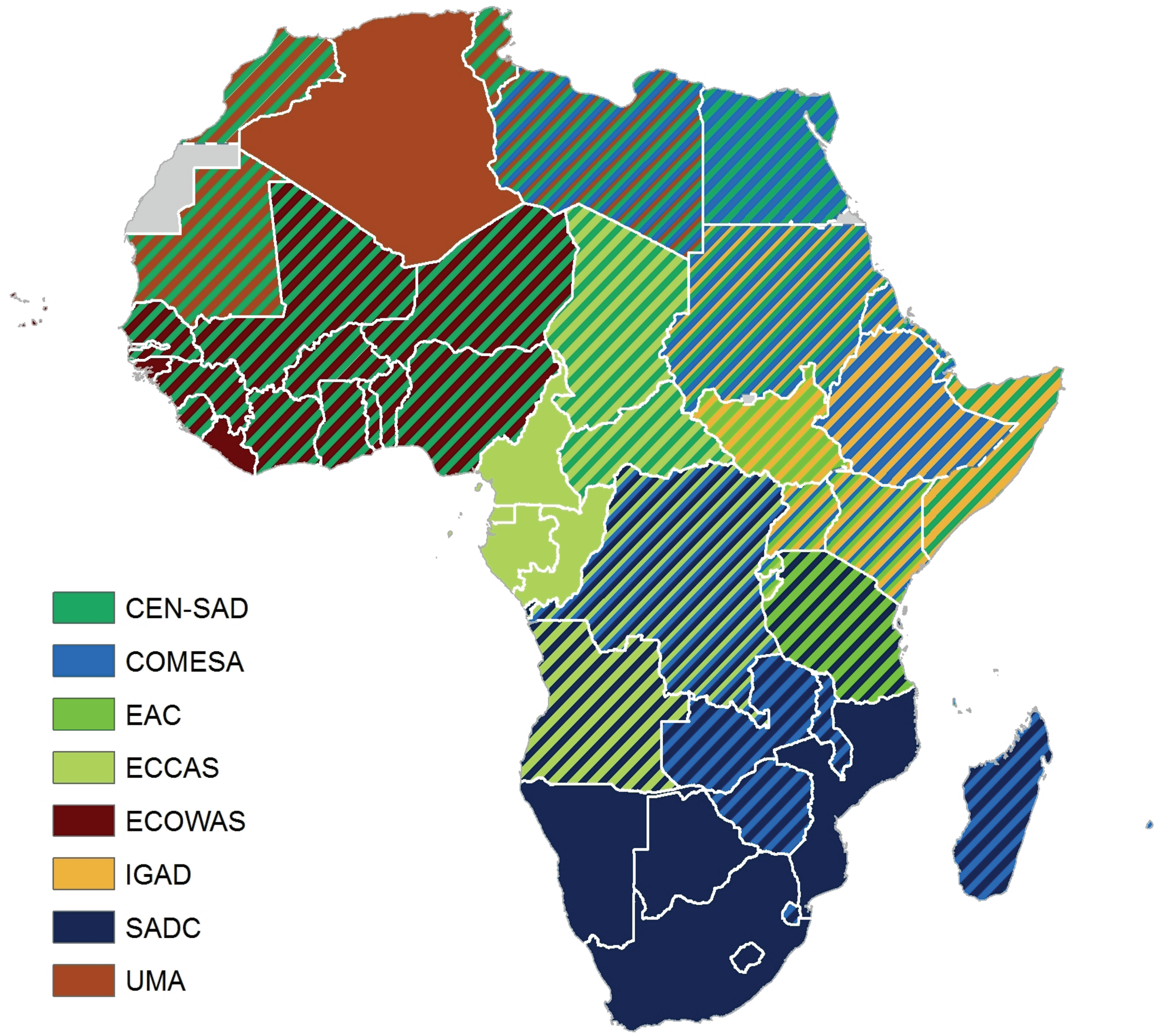
While business and consumer confidence have improved, investment, trade and productivity have not. This has a direct impact on both foreign and domestic investments in Africa, particularly in infrastructure. As the world's ***second-fastest*** growing region, Africa holds much promise for those willing to invest time to study our local economies and identify opportunities presented by a booming middle class with an endless appetite for consumables.

Although the Africa Report 2017 shows that virtually all countries plan large infrastructure projects and understand the need to industrialise, Africa cannot afford to be an 'investment risk' for infrastructure projects that advance sustainable inclusive development.

To this end, the AU-NEPAD Continental Business Network (CBN) continues to de-risk infrastructure projects in order to attract financing, especially through Pension and Sovereign Wealth Funds. In September 2017, NEPAD and the CBN initiated an Africa-led and Africa-owned campaign to increase African asset owners' contributions to African infrastructure from approximately 1.5% of their assets under management (AUM) to 5% of AUM. By using financial resources available on the continent and strengthening public-private partnerships, infrastructure investments should increase. The CBN has called for a more strategic engagement with domestic institutional investors in support of this campaign.

The AfCTA, is a monumental step for Africa; another significant milestone in Africa's integration process. I have to however aptly point out that the AfCFTA was signed in Kigali the capital that experienced complete turmoil some 24 years ago but is now poised to become the futuristic "***Wakanda.***"

Dr Mayaki, a former Prime Minister of Niger, is the current CEO of the African Union's NEPAD Agency.



Cement firms stare at dwindling fortunes as prices, production fall

By Allan Olingo

Cement manufacturers in the region are going through turbulent times, with profits falling and some going into loss territory, as a result of stiff competition from cheap imports, high power costs and low demand in the housing and construction sectors.

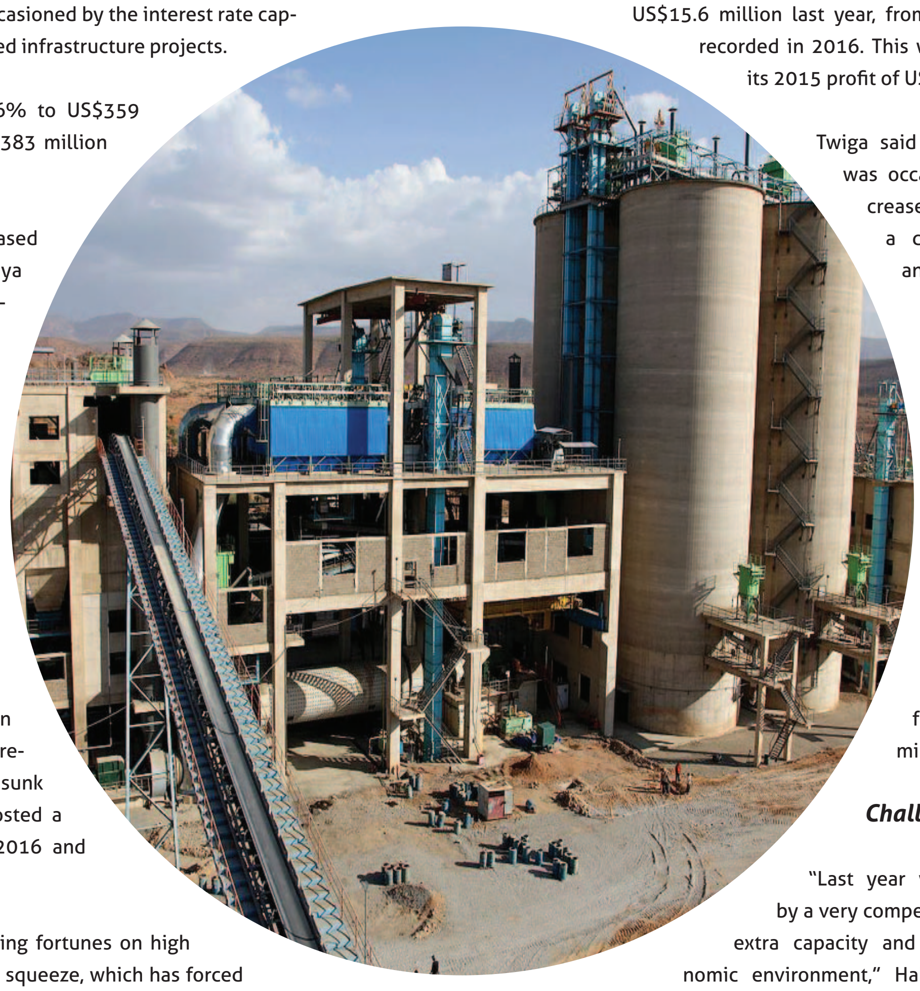
Bamburi, part of the Lafarge Group, and the region's largest cement firm, saw its net profit for 2017 drop by US$39 million to US$19.7 million due to lower sales in the Kenyan market, blamed on the prolonged election cycle, tightened liquidity occasioned by the interest rate capping law, drought and delayed infrastructure projects.

Its revenues dropped by 6% to US$359 million compared with US$383 million in 2016.

"The group's turnover decreased following lower sales in Kenya due to the contracted market following lower sales in Kenya due to contracted market. Uganda sales were broadly flat in both domestic and export markets," the company said in a statement.

The Kenya-based ARM Cement, producers of the Rhino brand, lead the sector in loss making, posting a loss of US$35 million in 2017, becoming one of the regional cement firms to have sunk deep in the red, having posted a loss of US$28 million in 2016 and US$28.9 million in 2015.

The firm blamed its dwindling fortunes on high operating costs and a credit squeeze, which has forced it to seek for equity investors to shore up its capital base.



In March this year, operations at its Kigali plant, Rwanda's second largest, were suspended because of a shortage of raw materials. The plant has an annual capacity of 100,000 tonnes.

In the Kenyan market, the firm is seen facing stiff competition, through vicious price wars from firms like Mombasa and National Cement, reducing its market share even as the sector also gets battered by the decline in the construction sector which posted a 4.9% growth in the last quarter of 2017, down from 7.8% in 2016.

Cement consumption decreased by 13.1% to 1.4 million tonnes from 1.6 million in 2016 greatly impacting manufacturers.

Other producers in Tanzania also saw their margins drop as a result of the price wars and overcapacity. Tanzania Portland Cement Company (TPCC) operating under the brand name Twiga, saw its net profit drop to US$15.6 million last year, from US$17.6 million recorded in 2016. This was almost half of its 2015 profit of US$24.88 million.

Twiga said the fall in profit was occasioned by an increase in income tax and a decrease in price and sales costs.

The firm saw its income tax nearly double to US$13.21 million last year from US$ 7.75million in 2016, while costs of sale also went up to US$81.03 million last year, up from US$74.86 million in 2016.

Challenges

"Last year was characterised by a very competitive market, with extra capacity and challenging economic environment," Hakan Gurdal, TPCC board chairman said.

The cement manufacturer also saw its revenue drop to US$118.3 million from US$122.08 million in the previous year, a fall it attributed to the general low market price of cement.

Tanga Cement Company Ltd, which trades under the Simba brand, dropped to a loss making position in the six months to June last year to US$7.75 million from a profit of US$4.88 million the previous year due to its the capital investment that raised its finance costs to US$6.65 million from US$264,244 the previous year.

"Accordingly, the capital investment impacted our operating profit with a depreciation charge of US$4.1 million compared with the previous half year depreciation of US$1.5 million. Despite challenging market conditions we remain positive for the medium term outlook with our highly focused sales strategy and improvement in market share. Market competition is expected to remain high and management is actively engaged in innovative sales initiatives to maximize sales volumes and prices to improve margins," Lau Masha, Tanga Cement board chair said.

The Tanzania cement sector has seen a complete disruption through the entry of Dangote Cement, with its discount pricing that has unsettled the large cement players.

In December, Dangote said Ethiopia was the most profitable market for its cement, selling more than 1.7 million tonnes to push the firm's sales volumes across its Pan-African operations by 7.5% to seven million tonnes. "Our factories continued to consolidate their market shares across Africa. Pan-African gross profit increased by 43.5% to US$88.6 million. Pan-African operations sold about 42% of total group cement volumes, provided nearly 32% of group revenues before inter-company eliminations," the firms outgoing chief executive officer Onne van der Weijde said in the financial report.

Uganda is currently experiencing a supply glitch, an indication of an increased demand which has set off price increases amongst dealers.

The country's two biggest cement producers; Tororo Cement in eastern Uganda and Hima Cement in Kasese, with an 80% market share, have attributed their decline in production on reduced electricity supply that has affected their plant operations.

Tororo Cement's factory executive director Morgan Gagranihe, said that the electricity the factory has been receiving is insufficient, affecting its production.

"Our production has halved by 600,000 tonnes to 1.2 million which, combined with increased competition for raw material by cement producers has constrained output," Mr Gagranihe said.

Operations

"We have a challenge in getting steady power supply given that our production process is power intensive; this affects production and the cement stock dispatch to the market. We are in constant engagement with the power utility firm to see how we can stabilise our supply for the long term," Hima's country chief executive Nicolas George said.

The EastAfrican also understands one of the two market leaders has not produced cement for two months due to ongoing maintenance works, which has greatly contributed to the supply hitch in the Ugandan market, setting off price increases among dealers.

Rwanda is also experiencing a shortage of cement that has driven the retail prices up even as one of its largest plants, Cimerwa undergoes maintenance.

The country's multibillion dollars infrastructure projects, including the US$418 million Bugesera International Airport, which is estimated to consume 50,000 tonnes of cement per day, will see the regional cement firms angling to reap from Kigali's rising cement demand.

According to the Rwanda Revenue Authority, the country imported 79,573 tonnes last year from Tanzania and 164,814 tonnes from Uganda.

"Rwanda's cement demand has reached 50,000 tonnes per month with at least 23,000 tonnes imported while Cimerwa produces 27,000 tonnes," Annette Karenzi, director-general of industries in the Ministry of Trade and Industry said.

Third producer

Cimerwa Cement majority shareholding is owned by Pretoria Portland Cement (PPC) and it boasts of an annual installed capacity of 600,000 tonnes although its production oscillates between 60% and 70%.

Kigali is also banking on getting a third local manufacturer, Prime Cement, after it signed a deal with a Danish company FL Smidth mid last year to build the US$65 million plant.

Even as the manufactures struggle with either reduced revenues, production challenges and high cost of doing business, the region is expecting to see an increased production capacity as cement manufactures angle to expand further.

Currently, the estimated plant utilisation rate within the region is 61.7% but Dyer & Blair Investment Bank predicts that this will fall to 45.4% by the end of this year, putting into doubt the effectiveness of these expansion moves.

Kenya accounts for 53.2% of the 21.1 million tonne installed capacity in the region followed by Tanzania with an annual installed capacity of 8.3 million tonnes against the current annual demand of 4.3 million tonnes. Tororo Cement is due to finish the construction of a US$40 million factory later this year, which will push its installed capacity with an additional 1.2 million tonnes to three million tonnes.

Savannah Cement also plans to increase its capacity by spending US$10 million on the venture that will see its installed capacity from the current 1.2 million tonnes to 2.4 million tonnes annually. It expects to complete this upgrade mid-2018.

In Tanzania, TPCC has also expanded its capacity through rehabilitating the old clinker lines. In Uganda, Kenyan Simba Cement is constructing its grinding plant in which it hopes to commission later this year.

Hima Cement is also expected to start production by June this year of its US$40 million plant in the same location.

This article was first published by the East African

Photo By: Gavin Houtheusen

Governor of Kisumu County, Prof Peter Anyang' Nyong'o (L) receives EAC Secretary General, Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko at his office in Kisumu, Kenya.

Rt Hon. Martin Ngoga takes Oath as Speaker of EALA.

EAC Secretary General, Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko hosted a farewell party for 12 exiting staff from the EAC Secretariat and the East African Legislative Assembly. Pictured above are Amb. Mfumukeko with the 12 exiting staff and other members of staff in a group photo during the occasion.

PICTORIAL

A hearty handshake as EAC Secretary General, Amb. Liberat Mfumukeko bids farewell to former EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Finance and Administration, Hon. Jesca Eiryo, whose six years' tenure ended in April 2018. Looking on is EAC Deputy Seceraty General in charge of Planning and Infrastructure, Eng. Steven Mlote.

EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Planning and infrastructure, Eng. Steven Mlote (with red tie) provides details of the EAC Headquarters model to German Foreign Minister, Hon. Heiko Mass during the Minister's visit to Arusha.

The Need for Medicines Regulation in the EAC

By Hon Christoph Bazivamo, Dr Stanley Sonoiya, & Dr David Mukanga

Medicines are perhaps as old as mankind. Unfortunately, medicines are not ordinary consumer goods, and therefore consumers may not be able to determine if a medicine is safe, efficacious, and of quality. Safety relates to weighting the potential benefits against the risks of using the medicine. Efficacy refers to the ability to produce the desired beneficial effect as claimed on the medicine label by the manufacturer.

Quality of a medicine is a manufacturing concept that addresses the consistency in the manufacturing process to ensure that medicines meet international standards in terms of strength, purity, packaging and labeling. It would be highly problematic for example, if the same pill you take today has a different quantity of the active substance (e.g. 10mg) from the one you take tomorrow (18mg) when both claim to contain 10mg. The concept of assuring quality has evolved over the time. However, even healthcare professionals (medical doctors, pharmacists) may not have the capacity to take informed decisions about all aspects of medicines without special training and access to information about how the medicine was manufactured.

What is the mandate of a Medicine Regulatory Authority or Agency?

National regulatory agencies (NRAs) protect public health by ensuring that medical products such as medicines, vaccines, and medical devices are safe, of quality, and are efficacious. Their role is codified in national legislation and put into practice by applying a set of internationally recommended core regulatory functions. According to the World Health Organization, NRAs contribute to promoting and protecting public health by ensuring that:

- Medicines are of the required quality, safety and efficacy;
- Health professionals and patients have the necessary information to enable them use medicines rationally;
- Medicines are appropriately manufactured, stored, distributed and dispensed;
- Illegal manufacturing and trade are detected and adequately sanctioned;
- Promotion and adverting is fair, balanced and aimed at rational drug use; and
- Access to medicines is not hindered by unjustified regulatory work.

A recent survey by the World Health Organization shows that only 40% of countries in the WHO Africa Region have an autonomous or semi-autonomous agency. Within the East Africa Community (EAC), four of the six member states have an autonomous or semi-autonomous agency. With strong national and EAC Secretariat leadership, the remaining two countries (Rwanda and Burundi) are close to setting up their own agencies.

A Bill to establish the Rwanda Food and Drugs Authority was passed into law and gazetted in February 2018. In March 2018, the National

Legislative Assembly of Burundi reviewed and considered a legislation establishing Autorité Burundaise de Regulation des Medicaments et des Aliments (ABREMA) that is a waiting to be gazetted into law.

The capacity of NRAs to effectively undertake their functions varies widely. The WHO categories regulatory agencies into maturity levels from 1 through 4 with 4 as the highest. High income countries are generally better able to finance regulatory authorities in terms of skills, numbers, and the facilities required to undertake their work. Due to these constraints, low income regulators can achieve a high standard of performance through reliance on the work done by others, and work sharing for those activities they may not be able to undertake on their own.

The EAC regulatory harmonization initiative : Goals, accomplishments, and what awaits

The East African Community Medicines Regulatory Harmonization initiative (EAC MRH) was launched in 2012 with a goal of harmonizing the regulation of medical products in the EAC Partner States in order to increase the availability of high-quality and safe essential medicines within the region. The initiative sought to remove duplication, disparate requirements among the countries, promote efficiencies, work sharing, build capacity, and reduce the time it takes for products to be authorized in the EAC without compromising product quality and safety.

The EAC MRH is part of the larger African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH) initiative launched in 2009 by the AU NEPAD Agency and partners including the World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan African Parliament, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), and DFID among others.

The EAC was the first Regional Economic Community (REC) to implement the initiative.

Over the last 5 years, the EAC MRH initiative has led to a much more harmonized system of product dossier submission across the EAC. All countries now use the same marketing authorization requirements and standards, as well as the same tools for assessment. In addition, joint assessment of dossiers is well underway with over 60 applications received and 9 products registered at country level based on a positive recommendation at the regional joint assessment.

The joint assessments provide a platform for the region to pull expertise and undertake high quality assessments that might not be possible in each individual country, and undertake review of complex products for which there is highly limited expertise in the region. This systems optimization brings with it efficiencies and costs savings that ultimately accrue to the health care system and the patient.

The EAC MRH initiative initially focused on generic medicines. As a result of the progress recorded, the initiative is now looking to expand its scope to other product classes (New Chemical Entities, vaccines, diagnostics) and other regulatory functions (safety surveillance, clinical trials). At the end of the day, this process assures that only safe, efficacious, and quality medicines can enter the EAC market.

Looking to the future, a regional technical cooperation agreement has been drafted that will underpin these developments and set the policy and legal basis for cooperation. This will allow certain classes of medicines to preferentially be assessed through the regional platform. This technical cooperation agreement has received input from multiple stakeholders at country level across the region, and was presented to the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers of Health in April of 2018.

Secondly, the heads of agencies from the Partner States have agreed with the EAC Secretariat to set up a small group of dedicated national technical staff to lead the technical aspects of the joint activities with close oversight from a regional forum of the heads of agencies. This small group will work closely with the EAC Secretariat, in delivering the set mandate. It is expected that this will go a long way in optimizing the regional processes and accelerating access to quality, lifesaving medicines. The heads of agencies have also agreed to explore avenues for financing regional joint activities including charging a premium fee to industry applicants that is strongly linked to a transparent and predictable regional mechanism.

Thirdly, the EAC MRH program will continue to build the capacity of all national agencies so that they can all effectively participate and contribute to regional joint activities.

Therefore, given these developments, and the ability of countries to rely eventually on a regional regulatory mechanism, why should each country continue to maintain its own autonomous agency or authority? We address this question in the next section of this article.

What is the value of an autonomous agency?

While the EAC MRH program promotes reliance and work-sharing amongst the EAC Partner States, as well as reliance on better resourced regulators including the WHO's prequalification program, there are functions/activities that each country must undertake on its own, and that no other country or agency can do it for another. These functions require a strong, autonomous, but right-sized agency so that access to medicines is not hindered by unjustified regulatory work. These functions, that need to be undertaken within each country by a regulatory authority include:

a) Maintaining a comprehensive register of medicines authorized (judged to be safe, efficacious and of good quality) to circulate in the country. This register is the first place of call to determine if any product on the market is genuine or a counterfeit;

b) Based on the national register of authorized medicines, and access to quality control laboratory capacities (each country does not need to have its own), regulators can then surveil, detect, and remove from the market any counterfeit medical products;

c) Where there is local manufacturing, provide regulatory oversight to ensure that manufactured products are safe, efficacious and of good quality;

d) Regulation and oversight of clinical trials for investigational new drugs (INDs) within their jurisdiction;

e) Ensure that health professionals and patients have the necessary information to enable them use medicines rationally;

f) Ensure medicines are appropriately stored, distributed and dispensed;

g) Contribute expertise to regional activities, as these are fully dependent on experts drawn from the countries; and

h) Monitoring the safety of marketed medicines including collecting and analyzing adverse reaction reports.

Finally, the reasons why these agencies need autonomy are: i) autonomy guarantees a level of independence (from undue influence) for the agency to make decisions on product quality, safety and efficacy on the basis of science and public health, and nothing else; ii) without an autonomous agency, it is difficult to provide the regulatory oversight necessary to assure that medical products produced locally are of quality for both the local and external markets. The external markets particularly, will be reluctant to buy products from markets in which the regulator's competency and independence are in doubt. Therefore, by maintaining high regulatory standards, NRAs allow their national manufacturers to participate in global commerce, as well as WHO's prequalification program and improve global supplies; iii) Thirdly, an autonomous agency is able to generate its own revenue through fees for service that allow it to hire and retain competent staff who play not only a public health function but advance national security through the agency's regulatory mandate.

Hon Christoph Bazivamo is the EAC Deputy Secretary General in charge of Social and Productive Sectors, EAC Secretariat; Dr Stanley Sonoiya is a Principal Health Officer at the EAC Secretariat and Dr David Mukanga is a Senior Program Officer Global Health with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

People with Epilepsy aren't protected in Africa - what needs to be done

By Jacob Mugumbate

In October 2017 Abdul Matola was stoned and burnt to death in Malawi after being accused of being a "bloodsucking vampire". Matola had lived with uncontrolled epilepsy - a highly treatable and non-infectious condition characterised by recurring seizures.

When he was caught by the mob, he was still recovering from a seizure in his garden. He was weak and not fully conscious.

Some Malawians, as well as people from other African countries, believe that epileptics could be witches or possessed by an evil spirit. People with epilepsy have been accused of eating human flesh, sucking human blood and committing various crimes.

Epilepsy is the most common serious chronic brain disorder in the world. More than 50 million people are affected by the condition. A fifth live in Africa.

Matola's death elicited an outcry from the public. Local epilepsy awareness organisations issued a petition calling on the government to intervene. Over the following weeks and months several people were arrested.

But beyond the arrests, the government in Malawi – like many others across the continent – have done little to institute policies that improve awareness and protect people who have epilepsy.

Matola's death exposed levels of ignorance about epilepsy that are commonplace in many communities across the continent. It highlighted the vulnerabilities that people with the condition face on a daily basis.

More importantly, it showed that there are gaps in the treatment offered to epileptics. These include a lack of awareness and a shortage of medicines, care services and facilities.

Unless governments on the continent increase awareness about epilepsy and create policies that protect people who suffer from this disease, little will change.

Not enough action

In the last 20 years there has been two attempts to get governments across the world to improve awareness around epilepsy.

In 2000 the World Health Organisation spearheaded the Global Campaign against Epilepsy which developed treatment guidelines in resource poor countries and trained health workers on how to handle people with epilepsy.

Projects were implemented in Zimbabwe, Senegal, Brazil and China.

Studies evaluating them proved that it was possible to treat and manage epilepsy successfully in poor resource settings using very few resources. But the studies also showed that the projects had very little impact and that a significant number of people with epilepsy were not getting services.

Then in 2015, the WHO adopted a resolution to address the health, social and public knowledge of epilepsy. Governments agreed to put epilepsy high on their agendas. And most African governments were signed up too.

But three years have passed since the resolution was adopted, and very little action has been taken by governments on the continent. Aside from a workshop attended by 21 countries in Ghana in 2015 not much has been done.

Government could, in fact, have taken the simple step of setting up teams to implement the resolution and to translate the policy into a programme of action. But this hasn't been done.

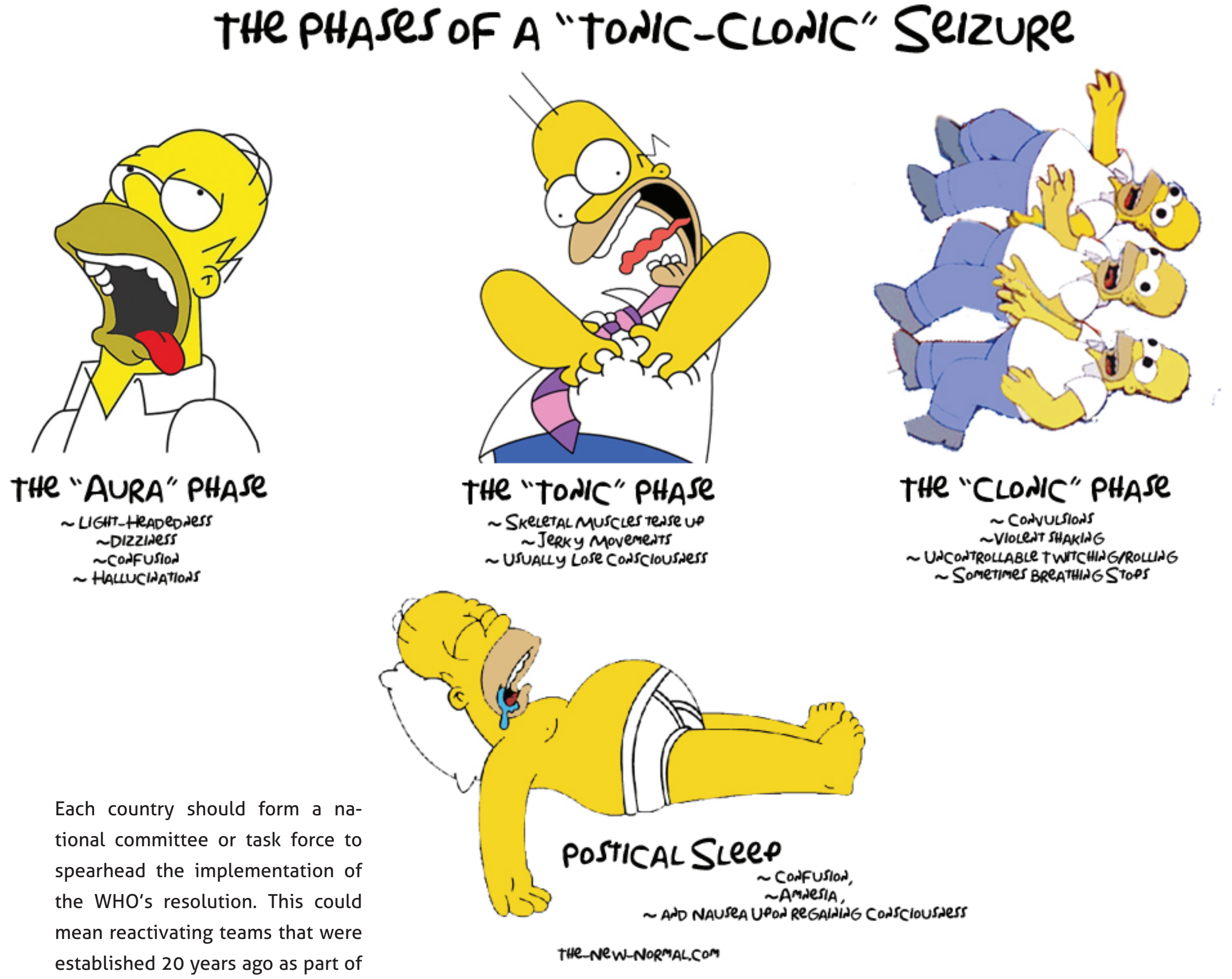
Most of the advocacy efforts have been led by non-governmental organisations. But these have only taken place in only a few countries and there are no concrete results.

The challenge is that in most countries there is no office that coordinates epilepsy affairs. Other challenges include the fact that:

- Support for the condition is inadequately funded,
- Epilepsy falls under mental health and lacks proper short term or long term plans.

Where there is political will, these challenges are surmountable through an approach that involves major stakeholders and opinion leaders.
Building awareness

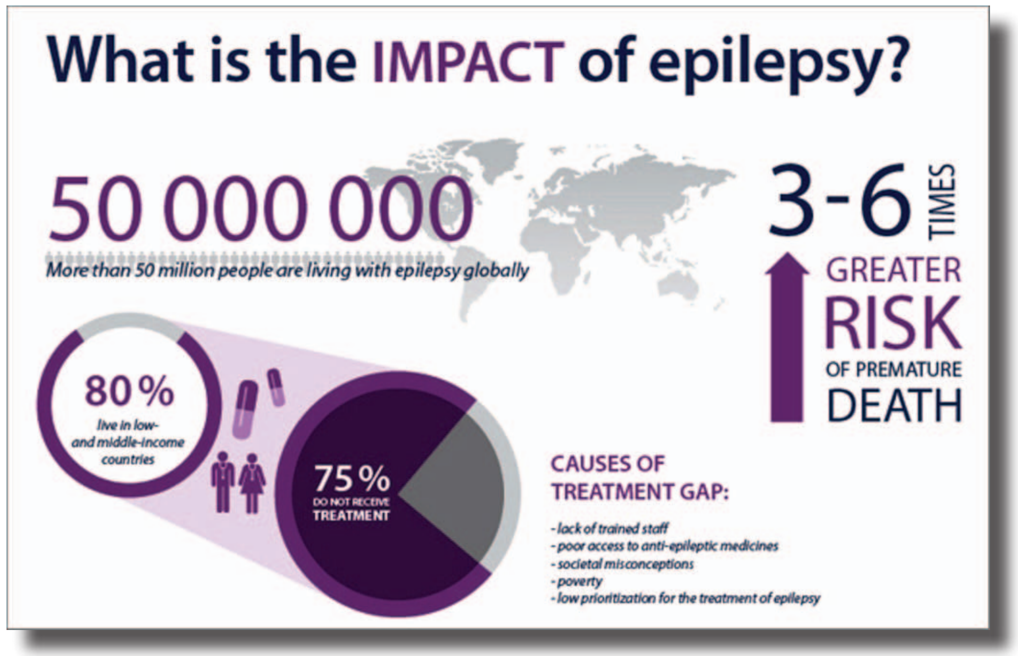
There are four steps that African governments should take to improve awareness around epilepsy. These would also address the risk of discrimination, disability or death associated with epilepsy.



Each country should form a national committee or task force to spearhead the implementation of the WHO's resolution. This could mean reactivating teams that were established 20 years ago as part of the global campaign against epilepsy.

Countries could also develop a national epilepsy plan to implement the resolution. This should include measures to ensure sustained epilepsy awareness, training of health workers, research, funding, treatment guidelines, human resourcing, medicines supply, operation of the national task force and other issues. And it should include a national epilepsy fund to resource the plan.

In addition to acknowledging the needs of people with epilepsy and resourcing them, governments also need to help strengthen organisations that support people with epilepsy.



If these steps are taken epilepsy could be better understood in Africa and people with epilepsy could be protected and afforded an opportunity to lead productive lives.

Jacob Mugumbate is a Lecturer at the University of Wollongong, Australia.

Private Sector call for Changes to Trade Act

By Patty Magubira



The East African Business Council (EABC) wants the EAC Elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) Act, 2017 amended to ease doing business in the region.

EABC executive director Lilian Awinja said the private sector is unhappy with the law and asked the East African Legislative Assembly to amend it to capture the concerns of the business community.

"The Act has a good intention of eliminating NTBs, but owing to various limitations, its objectives will not be achieved," Ms Awinja told a forum tasked with devising regulations for the Act, at a meeting held in Arusha. The Act is meant to provide a legal framework for the removal of non-tariff barriers and a mechanism for identifying and monitoring their elimination.

She said eliminating identified NTBs is dependent on long and winding EAC processes, such as bilateral talks.

"The Act gives partner states leeway to eliminate NTBs at their own pace, which is not helpful to the business community as some of their goods are perishable," she said.

Women-led businesses

The meeting was told that the EAC, SADC and Comesa have devised a mechanism for curbing NTBs on women-led businesses.

The Non-Tariff Measures and NTBs mechanism manager, Vonesai Hove, said the move follows the countries' agreement made in 2009 to put in place platforms such as short text messages and e-mails for timely reporting of NTBs.

Ms Hove was responding to Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association Ltd's (UWEAL) concerns about businesswomen being sexually abused when accessing services at border posts.

UWEAL chief executive officer Connie Kekihembo told the forum that some Customs officials demand sex from women traders in exchange for services.

Josephine Robert from the East African Women in Business Platform said it took women more time to cross borders than men in the region, as Customs officials often ask them for personal favours.

"Many women report cases of sexual harassment and violence such as rape, imprisonment and confiscation of their goods," she said.

Ms Awinja said that owing to the principle of consensus, Article 17 of the Act on sanctions will be difficult for the EAC Council of Ministers to implement.

The Article says the Council may recommend to the Summit to impose sanctions against a partner state that fails to comply with any directive, decision or recommendation of the Council.

"The Council of Ministers is also an interested party, so it cannot recommend sanctions on a partner state," Ms Awinja said, proposing that the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) determine the matter, as it is an independent and non-political arm of the Community.

She further proposed that the Alternative Dispute Resolution Mechanism, arbitration by the Trade Remedies Committee, and petition to the EACJ be an integral part of the procedures in eliminating NTBs.

Ms Awinja said directives of the Council are sometimes ignored, citing a dispute on the Railway Development Levy that Kenya had imposed on the private sector.

The EABC reported the NTB to the EAC Sectorial Council on Trade, Industry, Finance and Investments, which directed the Kenyan government to stop charging companies from the region.

"Immediately thereafter, Tanzania imposed the same levy in pure disregard of the directive by the Council," she said.

Kenneth Bagamuhundu, EAC Director General of Customs and Trade, concurred with Ms Awinja, saying removing tariff barriers was much easier than non-tariff barriers.

EAC principal trade officer Monica Mihigo allayed the private sector's fears saying the Secretariat had initiated a process of reviewing the Act.

She said the process requires all partner states to submit their concerns on the Act to the sectoral council by September 28 2018, for deliberations when they meet Nairobi.

Patty Magubira is a Tanzanian-based reporter for The EastAfrican, a publication of Nation Media Group. This article was first published in the EastAfrican.

Transparency is Central to Trade Transformation in East Africa

By Evariste Munyampundu

Why Transparency?

The predictability of business requires a transparent mechanism in place. Lack of transparency increases incidences of corruption and burdens business with extra costs. Transparency in trade is crucial for the East African Community because it makes the business environment more predictable in addition to creating increased awareness among businesspeople of the processes, laws and regulations that they have to comply with.

It is difficult to operate in a business environment which is not transparent. In a nutshell, transparency in business is measure aimed at facilitating trade. The Trade Information Portal (TIP) maps all procedures and requirements with which businesses must comply in importing, exporting and transiting goods.

The EAC is in the process of launching TIPs in all the six Partner States. Rwanda on March 29, 2018 launched its own TIP, becoming the second country in the EAC to do so after Kenya, which launched its own TIP late last year. Rwanda's online trade portal which will be run by the Rwanda Revenue Authority will provide all information concerning export, import and transit of goods in Rwanda to the business community, government agencies and all interested parties for free.

The Rwandan TIP will give importers and exporters quick access to step-by-step guides for trade related procedures (licenses, permits and clearance process). Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA) Commissioner General Richard Tusabe said that the online portal was part of the RRA's efforts to improve the efficiency of trade in and out of Rwanda by reducing the time needed to import and export goods by 47 per cent and 91 per cent respectively.

Traders in Rwanda and other EAC Partner States have encountered difficulties accessing relevant information about exportation, importation and all procedures related to clearance for many years.

It is therefore anticipated that the TIPs will reduce the Costs of Doing Business within the Community and make the region more attractive to investors.

WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation

In addition to the regional efforts to address the bottlenecks in the EAC supply chain, the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) brought about a binding legal framework.

The WTO TFA, adopted by the WTO General Council on November 27th, 2014 came into force on February 22nd, 2017. The TFA aims to create a more efficient trade environment by targeting administrative barriers to trade – unnecessary border inspections, excessive documentation and data requirements, manual processes, lack of coordination among border authorities and complex and inefficient rules and procedures. Transparency is provided for in Article 1 of the Agreement. You can find the WTO agreement by clicking on this link:
https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/20y_e/wto_tradefacilitation_e.pdf

Within the EAC, a lot of efforts have been deployed to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. The agreement has been ratified by Kenya and Rwanda only; other Partner States are at the last stages of ratification.

What EAC is doing to increase transparency in Trade

In order to resolve the problem of lack of information to business, Trade Information Portals (TIPs) are currently be installed in all the EAC Partner States (Kenya was the first country to launch an online portal in 2017).

Apart from fostering transparency in trade processes, some of the anticipated benefits for the InfoTradeKenya portal to traders and government include:

- Providing a concise summary of foreign trade processes;
- A repository of trade related laws, regulations, acts and legislations;
- Quick responses to queries from traders on compliance issues;
- Empowerment of traders and investors with prior information to enable them comply with regulatory requirements for importation and exportation of goods;
- Enabling traders to perform all trade procedures with fewer time consuming interactions;
- Provides a step-b-step guide on foreign trade procedures;
- Boosting Kenya's efforts to become competitive player on the global market;
- Improving ease of doing business;
- Bridging the information gap on trade processes;
- Reducing in penalties resulting from non-compliance;
- Reducing errors in documentation, and;
- Provision of complete, timely and accurate foreign trade information.

Once they are fully operational under the supervision of the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC), TIPs are expected to provide trade operators with all the necessary regulatory and practical information on import, export and transit procedures, and governments with a powerful tool to simplify procedures and to support improved national trade facilitation policies.

Furthermore, the portals will be allowed to interact enabling member states to compare their performance in terms of trade facilitation, and to share their progress and establish benchmarks though an online regional "EAC trade facilitation index." This is the link http://infotradekenya.go.ke/ of Kenya's TIP which shows the Step by Step framework on international and regional trade procedures. For example, it takes 8 steps to export fruits and vegetables; 21 steps to export coffee; 28 steps to export tea; 8 steps to export flowers; 28 steps to import pharmaceuticals products, and; 26 steps to import motor vehicles for commercial use.

Transparency in trade increases predictability and reduction of costs of doing business. The Private Sector is encouraged to frequently visit the online Trade Information Portals to save time in complying with trading requirements across borders and propose the changes in order to simplify trade.

Mr. Munyampundu is Customs Officer (Procedures and Trade Facilitation) at the EAC Secretariat in Arusha, Tanzania.

CFTA: Africa Positions for "The World's Largest Free Trade Area". What Are The Implications?

*As African heads of state and government met in the Rwandan capital Kigali to formally sign the much-talked about Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), **Rafiq Raji** of the African Business Magazine asks - Is Africa ready?*

As African heads of state and government met in the Rwandan capital Kigali to formally sign the much-talked about Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA), Rafiq Raji of the African Business Magazine asks - Is Africa ready? More than two years after the signing of the Sharm-el-Sheikh Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) agreement in June 2015 – which brought together member states of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC) and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) – trade ministers from all of Africa's 54 countries, including those of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which already have a common external tariff, met in Niamey, the capital of Niger, in early December last year to agree final terms for the African Union's Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA).

By and large, they made good progress. However, there are still issues to iron out. Member states have yet to agree on tariffs on all goods, for instance although on services, they successfully closed the book.

In order to make a meaningful impact, the CFTA will have to improve the quality as well as the quantity of intra-African trade. The objective of the CFTA is primarily to engender more intra-African trade, which currently comprises just 15% of the continent's total merchandise trade. When compared with intra-regional trade in other continents – 67% in Europe, 58% in Asia and 48% in North America – this is quite low.

Efforts, thus far, at improving the low trade interactions within the continent, have clearly not been very effective. There are signs of improvement, though. According to most recent data from Cairo-based African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), intra-African trade grew by 8% in the first nine months of 2017, with Guinea, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, and Sierra Leone in the lead. This is definitely better than the marginal 0.6% growth to US$ 156.94 billion recorded in 2016.

Even so, there is still much road to cover before intra-African trade recovers to the 2013 peak level of US$ 174.9 billion. And as recently as 2015, intra-African trade growth was almost 9%. Afreximbank attributes the latest recovery to rising commodity prices, "improved regional trade across regional economic communities and some countries' increased focus on promoting intra-African trade." This could be the start of a paradigm shift.

Trading within and keeping up

After the jamboree that herald the signing of the CFTA, the various heads of government may as usual go back to their capitals and do little to implement the accords. However, things could be different this time: the need for improved intra-regional trade relations is now almost existential.

With additive manufacturing, automation and other fourth industrial revolution innovations likely to maintain the insurmountable advantage of developed economies, African manufactures will only thrive if they are traded within the continent. And since it is only by trading more with each other that this could be achieved, African governments will need to ensure hassle-free market access for African-made goods. This is the underlying motivation behind the CFTA.

To meet the continent's needs, however, more of African countries' predominantly primary commodity international trade will have to be pared down. For example, instead of exporting so much of their cocoa to Europe and the US, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire should keep more of the crop at home to produce chocolate and other cocoa-related manufactures. Batteries used to power electric vehicles could be manufactured in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia, where the key input, cobalt, is found in abundance, instead of exporting the mineral to China. Were the CFTA able to boost the quality of trade as much as the quantity, it could be truly groundbreaking. Considering how hard it has been to achieve even the slightest consensus on trade integration, however, this is probably too much to ask. But politicians cannot go on talking about the need for greater beneficiation without ever taking any concrete action.

Intra-African trade grew by 8% in the first nine months of 2017, with Guinea, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Equatorial Guinea, and Sierra Leone in the lead.

To meet the continent's needs, more of African countries' predominantly primary commodity international trade have to be pared down. For example, batteries used to power electric vehicles could be manufactured in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia, where the key input, cobalt, is found in abundance, instead of exporting the mineral to China.

Strangely, the bulk of the small intra-African trade is in manufactures. But these tend to be goods like processed food products, cement, and so on, which are not complicated to manufacture. And even these supposedly simpler manufactures have to contend with cheaper imports in some African countries.

EPAs and other trade agreements

The CFTA signing will still be a work in progress. Negotiations on such important issues like intellectual property rights, tariffs for some goods, what constitutes proper competitive behaviour and so on, are still ongoing. Besides, there is the bigger issue of how African countries would extricate them selves from constraining bilateral and multilateral trade agreements with developed economies, which at first glance seem beneficial to African countries but on further scrutiny have been found to be ultimately detrimental to their long-term industrial development.

The European Union's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) top the list. In 2016, for instance, Africa's trade with the European Union was valued at € 262 billion (US$ 324 billion), with a relatively small trade deficit of € 28.6 billion.

However, the fact that 62% of Africa's exports were primary products and 71% of its imports were manufactures puts that deficit in a different light. Thus, African countries will in addition to trading more with each other also need to exclude outsiders with as much zeal, at least for a while.

Vision to reality

When the CFTA vision becomes a reality, intra-African trade could increase by at least 50% over the next five years, according to some estimates. A market of more than 1.2 billion people with a combined GDP of US$ 2.2 trillion is a far stronger bulwark against limiting external trade forces than the tiny ones that inevitably get overwhelmed in negotiations with big countries – even as stand-alone economies – like the US, Britain and China.

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A market of more than 1.2bn people with a combined GDP of $2.2 trillion is a far stronger bulwark against limiting external trade forces.

Incidentally, even these countries which already trade a great deal within their own continents are becoming increasingly isolationist.

So, just as African countries are beginning to find trade unity, previously globalist and more integrated ones abroad are beginning to flirt with insularity. Benedict Oramah, president of Afreximbank, put it succinctly in remarks he made in early December:

"While the speed with which the CFTA has been concluded appears to indicate Africa's preference for unity, we have to be mindful that the attainment of the ultimate goal of the CFTA of strengthening Africa's role in global trade may be more difficult to achieve under the wave of isolationism sweeping across other markets."

In any case, the trade barriers that really require attention on the continent would barely surface in negotiations or be amenable to them. For instance, infrastructure – which with its terrible state and its huge financing deficit (US$ 93 billion per annum) adds to logistical costs and retail prices – is one of the reasons why African goods are not competitive.

Non-tariff barriers like that would require not just collaboration between African governments but a sense of initiative by each of them.

Domestic Violence

The Unspoken Hurdle in Regional Integration

By Hellen T. Shwanda

Many East African women with the potential to take various leadership roles in the region are demoralised. They are unable to contribute to the integration agenda, not for lack of opportunities, but from the unspoken hurdle – Domestic Violence.

In East Africa, many women are abused by their husbands but they cannot speak out. A battered woman, whether in the board room or in the '*shamba*,' is unable to perform to her full potential.

This dehumanising act of violence affects not only her body but mind as well; it takes away her self-esteem and her basic human right to enjoy life. The aspect of equal opportunities for both men and women to access employment in the EAC region cannot be achieved when women are not free from all forms of violence.

When a woman is battered, her drive is battered, her ambitions are battered; she loses the interest to compete for public office(s) or anything else for that matter. Domestic violence is a vice that needs to be addressed and not swept under the carpet under the pretext that it is a family and/or cultural issue.

Women, like their male counterparts, deserve to be treated with dignity in homes and in public as clearly stated in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 3; "*Every individual shall be equal before the law. Every individual shall be entitled to equal protection of the law*". It is thus our individual responsibility to speak up about this vice that is considered taboo in our African setting.

The role of women in socio-economic development in the East African Community is well stipulated in Article 121 of The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community. The Article states; "*The Partner States recognise that women make a significant contribution towards the process of socio-economic transformation and sustainable growth and that it is impossible to implement effective programmes for the economic and social development of the Partner States without the full participation of women.*"

The full participation of women shall not come to fruition when a good number are living in hostile homes and environments.

According to my recent academic research findings on "Challenges in the Participation of Professional Women in Leadership - a Case Study of the East African Community"; domestic violence emerged as one the hindrances to the integration process. Highlighted under family issues and responsibilities of women who happen to be few in the Integration projects as they lack adequate capacity to do business, lack financial support and have little representation at the leadership level of EAC.

Let me take this opportunity to applaud the President of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, who has come out boldly to talk about domestic violence. In his speech on the International Women's Day, 8th March 2018; he said; "***Women are the base of society***" and they should not be marginalised. He further lashed out at men who have made a habit to beat up their spouses. He called men who batter their wives "*foolish*" and "*cowards*". He urged men to stop physically abusing their wives. "If you want to fight, why don't you look for a fellow man and fight".

Therefore, the onus is on women to speak up and denounce violence in all its forms; physical which includes battering and causing bodily harm; emotional: controlling behaviour, threatening violence, withholding love/support, isolation, bullying, and keeping women in constant fear and uncertainty. There is also the economic aspect of domestic violence: withholding financial support, not providing enough for basic family needs, deprivation of financial independence, spending house upkeep allowance on personal entertainment - at the bar, not allowing a woman to hold a job or go to pursue an education and extremes of selling household items. Verbal abuse consists of name calling, humiliation, undermining, brainwashing, using abusive language, shouting and snide comments.

Fellow women, the truth is; you are not better in an abusive relationship.
We can never imagine what some women go through behind closed doors. The society is bleeding. Children of violent homes live in constant fear and trauma of seeing their mothers battered.

My questions are: what do you do when the person who should make you stop crying, is the one who makes you cry? Where is our refugee as women? Our children? Are we surprised that we have an increasing number of street children in the region?

Way forward

Empowering women economically, through education and entrepreneurship can help bring an end to rampant Domestic Violence. President Museveni said, "If the girls are not economically empowered, they will remain vulnerable to these bully men." In this vein, EAC governments should endeavour to have the girl child in school and ensure that there is a conducive environment for her to remain in school.

Women should break the silence and say 'NO' to domestic violence in order to get support. This support should come from the government and its agencies such as police, the clergy the immediate family and society at large.

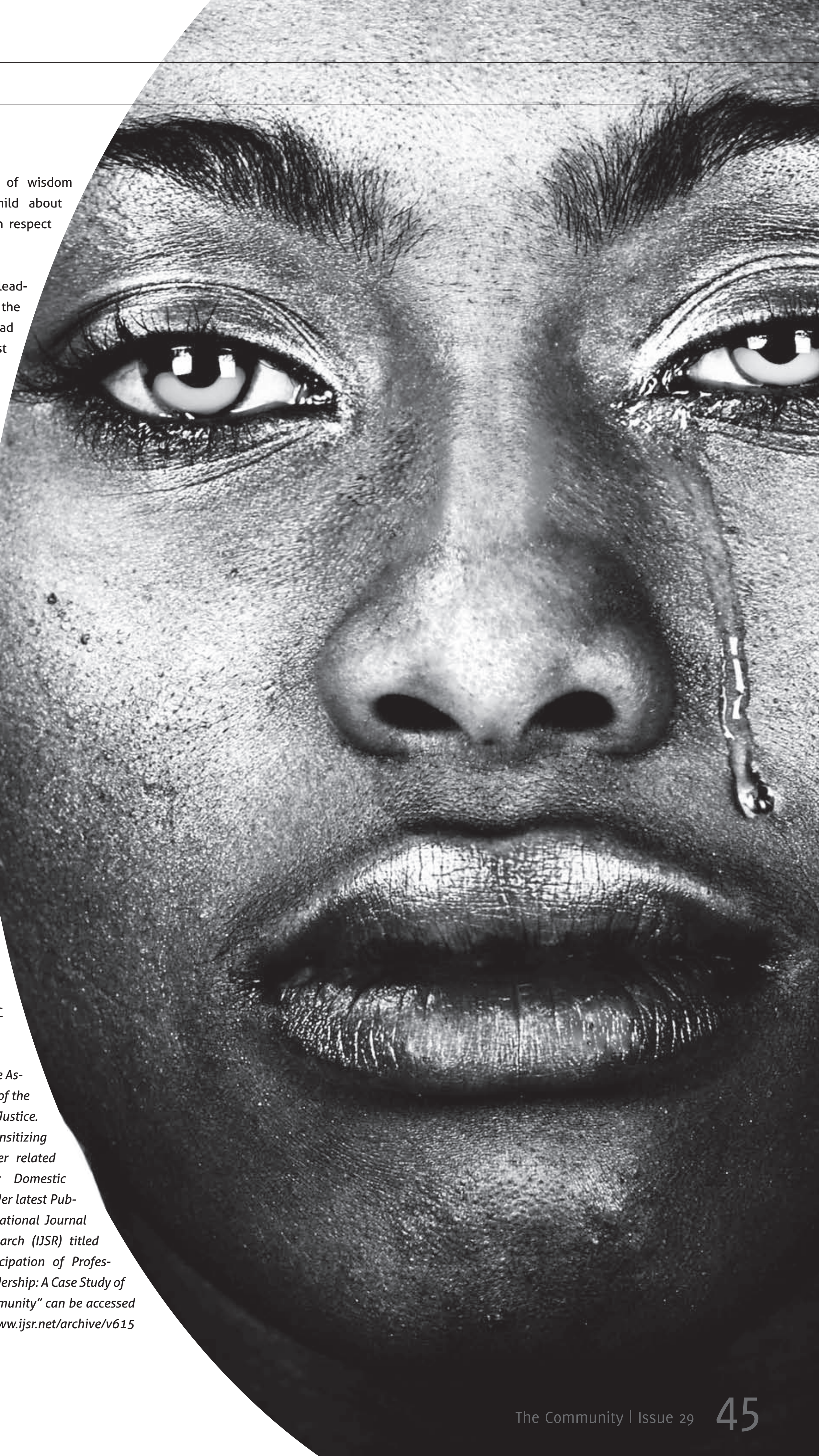
Let the clergy come to the forefront of the fight against domestic violence in all its forms on the pulpit by preaching to young men.

Let the older men of wisdom mentor the boy child about treating women with respect and dignity.

Let the women in leadership positions in the region to take the lead in the fight against domestic violence. The creation of awareness about this vice shall promote the integration process to another level. Women who live in peaceful homes and environments are capable of propelling the integration process to the next level, in line with the Mission of EAC "*to widen and deepen economic, political, social and cultural integration...*"

A culture of peaceful resolution of family disagreements, disputes and or conflicts should be adopted in the EAC region.

Hellen is the Executive Assistant to the Judges of the East African Court of Justice. She is keen on sensitizing women about gender related matters particularly Domestic Violence in society. Her latest Publication in the International Journal of Science and Research (IJSR) titled "Challenges in Participation of Professional Women in Leadership: A Case Study of the East African Community" can be accessed on this link: https://www.ijsr.net/archive/v61501.php



Health: A Crucial Component in EAC Integration

By Fadhili Maganya

Many consider the key components of regional integration to be economic, social, cultural and political as key components; often overlooking Health.

I do take cognizance of the provisions of Article 118 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community.

The Article stipulates co-ordination in Health matters in the region. In addition, there have been multiple strategic interventions by the EAC Secretariat through its Health Department. Frameworks have been developed to respond to identified regional health challenges and priority interventions including HIV and AIDS, Reproductive Health, Pharmaceutical Policy, and Food Safety and Quality among others.

For the East African Community to prosper, there is need for Partner States, to invest in health. We, the people of East Africa, want to see health and related programmes included in the Partner States' priorities.

We want to see primary health care and facilities to the Mwananchi are given concern and the weight they deserve.

The East African Mwananchi should be able to get health and medical attention at a walkable distance; medical supplies and equipment should be affordable; while Doctors and other medical personnel have the required skills, experiences and a safe working environment.

In order for the East African Community to realize its intended goal of becoming a federation, while embracing our slogan of "One People, One Destiny", improved health care and facilities is a must!

Fadhili is a Security Assistant at the EAC Secretariat

Brain Bashers

1

I was walking down Mulberry Lane,
I met a man doing the same.
He tipped his hat and drew his cane,
And in this rhyme I said his name.

What was the man's name?

2

What number do you get if...

...you divide 200 by 1/2 and add 7?

3

I want to travel 1,000 miles on an adult tricycle and I have two spare tyres.

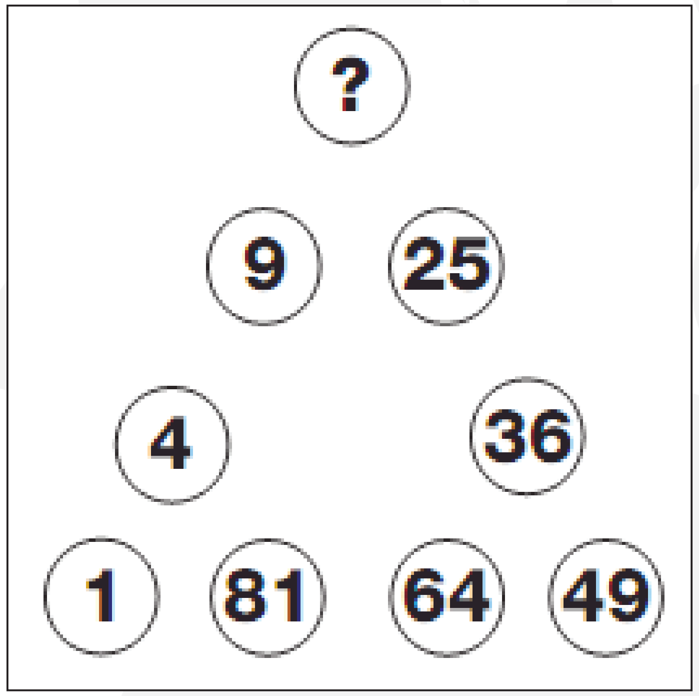
However, I want to use all five tyres equally and have an equal mileage on each of the five tyres by the end of the trip.

Of course I can only use three tyres at a time, so I will have to change tyres during the trip.

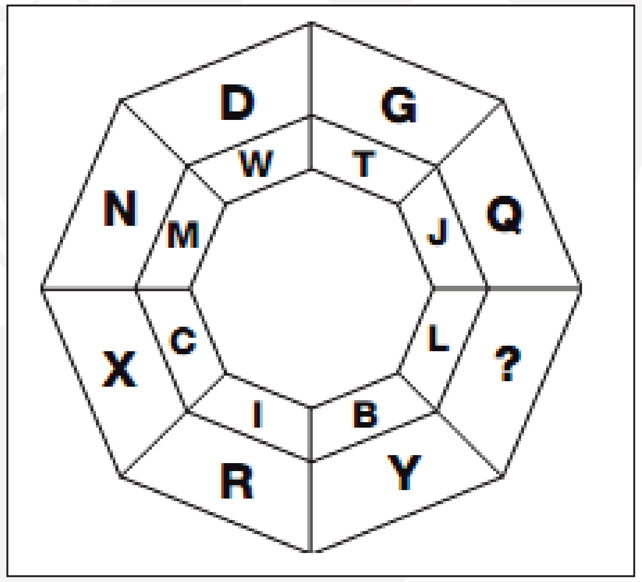
At the end of the trip how many miles will each tyre have been used?

[**HINT**: How many tyre miles have been travelled?]

4 **Which number replaces the question mark?**



5 **Which letter replaces the question mark?**



1 Answer: Andrew.
He tipped his hat and drew his cane

2 407

3 600 miles. A total of 1,000 miles have been travelled and at any one time, three tyres are travelling. Therefore 3,000 tyre miles have been travelled, which is shared equally by the 5 tyres. Now go back and read the THIRD word in each line from the top.

4 Answer: 16
Explanation: Starting bottom left and moving clockwise around the triangle, numbers follow the sequence of square Numbers.

5 Answer: 0
Explanation: In each segment of the diagram are a pair of letters, one of which is the same distance from the start of the alphabet as the other is from the end.

EAC
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ONE PEOPLE, ONE DESTINY